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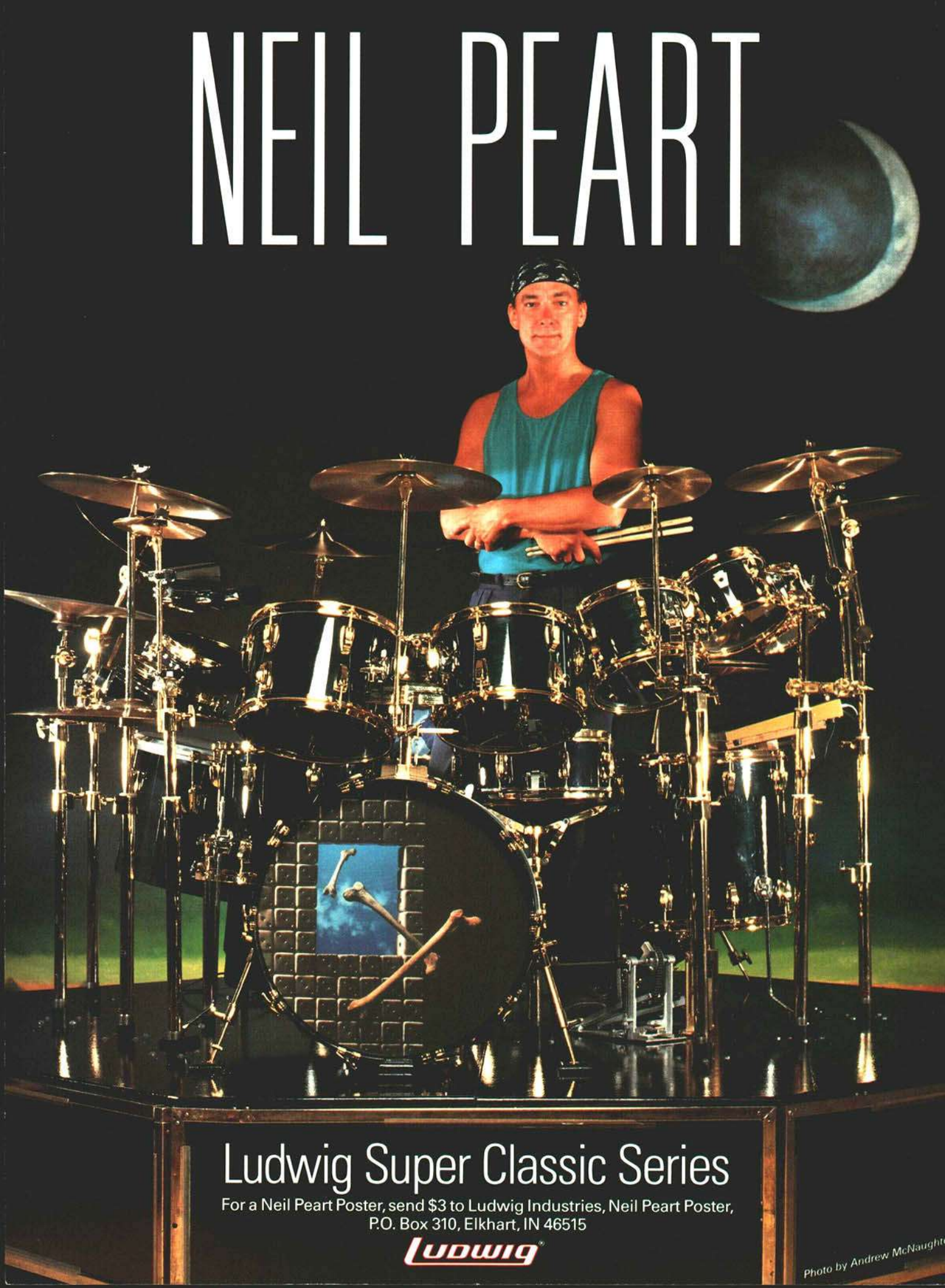
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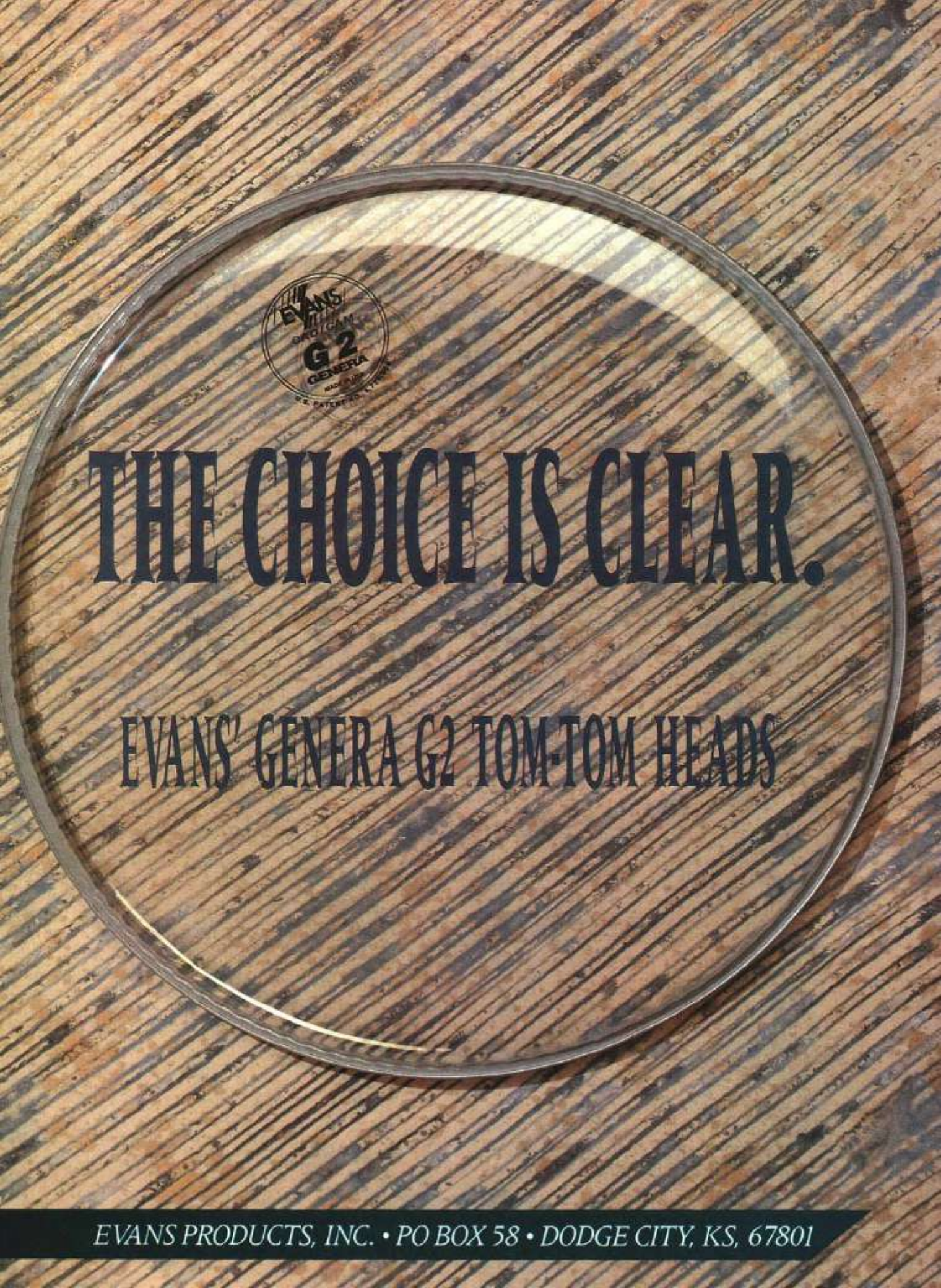

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VOLUME 16, NUMBER 8

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FEATURES

MICKEY CURRY

Since grooving behind Hall & Oates during the duo's hottest period, Mickey Curry has lent his talents to people like Bryan Adams, the Cult, Alice Cooper, Steve Winwood, and David Bowie. In this exclusive interview, learn what one of today's hottest drummers has to say about playing with the stars in the studio and on the road.

• by *Robyn Flans*

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THE 25 GREATEST DRUM RECORDS

Here are THE records—the ones that ushered in new eras of drumming, that set the pace for thousands of drummers to come, that displayed the talents of our most innovative artists. And check out our special sidebar, where top drummers, along with MD staffers and writers, list their own personal faves.

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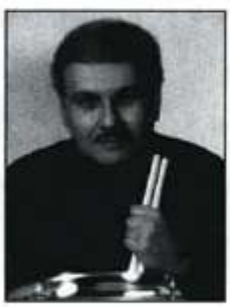

It's a fact that a magazine is not successful unless it forms a solid bond with its readers. And though the sale of advertising space is the other essential ingredient, the reader must *always* be given first priority.

The reasoning behind this is really quite simple. If a magazine fails to deliver a wide, satisfied readership to advertisers, those advertisers would not be very interested in running ads. No readers = no advertisers, and that predicament would result in the demise of the publication itself. The point is, a loyal readership is the foundation upon which *everything* else rests.

Interestingly, there's a small percentage of advertisers in our industry who somehow fail to grasp this simple truth. They're under the false impression that *Modern Drummer* exists first and foremost to serve *their* interests, and feel we are obligated to grant their every wish in return for their support. Somehow, they overlook the fact that *MD* delivers their advertising message to thousands upon thousands of drummers around the world every month, in direct return for their financial support.

This is not to say that we totally ignore our advertisers' requests. Most of them are very much aware of our willingness to work with them in an effort to run their advertising in the most presentable, cost-efficient manner possible. However, *working with* and being *dictated to* are two entirely different matters.

It's important for advertisers to understand that a consumer magazine that represents an entire industry exists primarily to serve those consumers. Magazines were not created for the sake of advertising. In a sense, advertisers are passengers on the vehicles that publishers create for their readers. They don't own the vehicles. They pay for their passage, and deserve to be treated with courtesy and respect, and allowed an opportunity to *suggest* how the vehicle might best serve their needs. Certainly, their financial contributions are important. Without them, many vehicles would probably run out of gas. But advertisers are not in charge of what happens in our vehicle. They may not deface the vehicle, and certainly may not dictate the vehicle's editorial content, design, or direction.

Somehow, I find it necessary to point this out every now and then, particularly for those who must be reminded of how essential it is for us to adhere to these basic publishing precepts. It's the only way an industry publication can develop a responsive audience, retain its credibility, maintain its integrity, and actually best serve both readers *and* advertisers in the long run. .

MODERN DRUMMER

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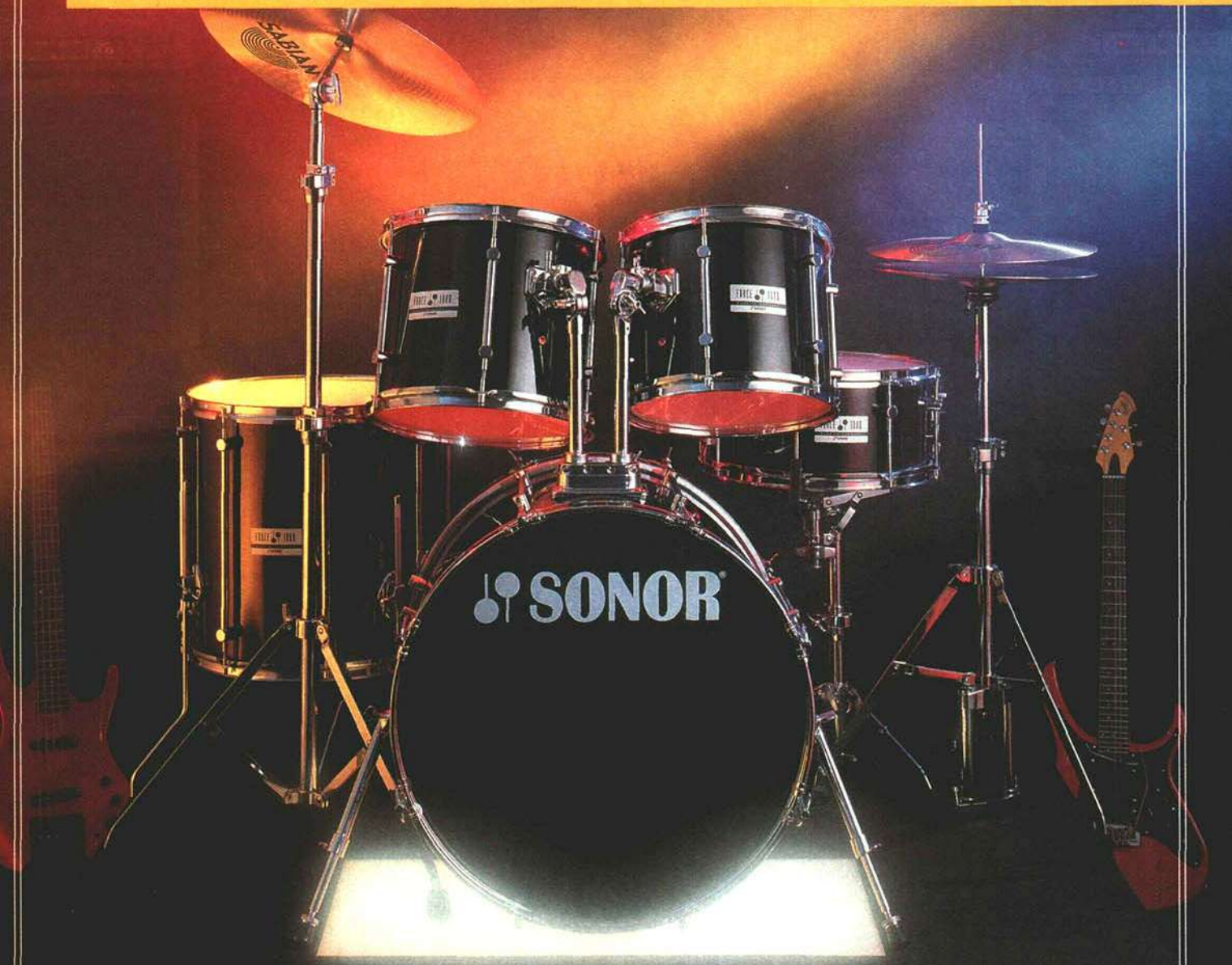

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Matt Cameron

Thanks for your May '92 story on Matt Cameron. It's great to see *MD* giving coverage to hot, innovative drummers right away, instead of waiting to see if they are going to become legends first. I like to read about who's making waves *now*—even if they fade into oblivion next year. (I don't think that'll happen with Matt, though. He's got too much talent.) I hope *MD* continues to keep on top of what's new and exciting in drumming.

Billy Friederich
Dallas TX

Willie Ornelas

Thanks for your May feature on Willie Ornelas. It was my pleasure to meet Willie while I was living in Colorado during the mid-'70s. He befriended me while he was recording a project at Caribou Ranch. Throughout following years he provided advice and learning opportunities to me. I got to watch him cut albums and TV soundtracks and perform live. Although Willie has not been as "high profile" as many great drummers, he has proven himself a brilliant craftsman. Thanks to Willie for his enormous inspiration, to Robyn Flans for asking the right questions (again), and to *MD* for finally recognizing Willie.

Andy Peake
Nashville TN

All American Corrections

On page 30 of your May 1992 issue, you list some of Matt Cameron's "inspirational" recordings, including *All American Boy* by Rick Derringer. The drummer shown is incorrect. Randy Zehringer was the drummer for The McCoys, Rick Derringer's earlier group. The drummers who played on *All American Boy* were Joe Vitale (on two cuts) and Bobby Caldwell. Also, the catalog number for the album is KZ32481, not ZK32481.

Allan McGuffey
Louisville KY

How To Make It Big

I'd like to thank you for the "How To Make It Big" article by Adam J. Budofsky in the May issue. It was a well-written, honest article about the risks of the music business. It was actually encouraging to me—as a young drummer interested in entering the business—because it seems that I'm heading in the right direction.

Andrew McMullen
Corunna, Ontario
Canada

I'm responding to your May '92 feature "How To Make It Big." Your letter-writer, Sammy, is going to be a sad drummer. He wants to make it big "more than anything." Any drummer who wants great success more than the simple joy of making music isn't going to last. A drummer must *love to play* more than anything.

I am a young drummer, and I would certainly enjoy success if it were to happen. But first and foremost I love to play and to please people with music. I would make music for nothing but the smiles on people's faces. To me, articles like "How To Make It Big" just get in the way of what is left of music.

Name withheld
Providence RI

Bobby Needs Help

I recently saw a segment on the *Entertainment Tonight* TV show regarding Bobby LaKind, original percussionist for the Doobie Brothers. It focused on his cancer, the uncertainty of his future, and his financial troubles. Bobby has brought pleasure to thousands; is there something the drumming community can do to help him through this?

Myron Medwecky
Address not given

Editor's note: Words of encouragement and contributions to assist Bobby may be sent to Bobby LaKind, c/o Keith Knudsen, 12215 Hesby St., No. Hollywood, CA 91607.

Hello From Hal

Could you please let your readers know that I've made a move to Northern California, where I'm joining a music production house and am probably going to do a talk/music radio show. I still love to hear from drummers, and I'd appreciate your printing my new address. Thanks!

Hal Blaine
705 Adobe Rd.
Santa Rosa, CA 95404

Getting Replaced In The Studio

I just finished reading "Getting Replaced In The Studio" in your April '92 issue, and I am most distressed! I have yet to make it to the "big time" with my band, but if and when I do, is this what I have to look forward to? And will this happen to other musicians—or hell, even the lead singer? (Remember Milli Vanilli?)

It seems to be a problem with the *producers.* The music industry has allowed a select few to control the talents of bands that were originally signed because of their *collective sound.* Who are these people, anyway? If a producer can't do his or her job within the time frame allowed with the musicians in the band, then maybe *we* should call in a *new producer.*

Tony Wartel
Passaic Park NJ

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Rod Morgenstein

"It's been a. big deja vu experience," Rod Morgenstein says about the recent reunion of the Dixie Dregs. "We started talking around the spring of '91, while I was in the midst of a 13-month world tour with Winger. By August, record companies were interested that we might be getting back together. By the end of '91 we had signed with the re-formed Capricorn label—the original label that signed us in the late '70s."

The Dixie Dregs rehearsed in early February, and then did 14 gigs over a two-and-a-half week period. The two shows in Atlanta were recorded, and the resulting album is called *Bring Them Back Alive.* The band says it definitely plans to tour to support it. "The schedule is contingent on the recording and release of the next Winger album," Rod explains. "The earliest Winger could have an album out is in the fall. So I'm just trying to fit everything in around each other."

Morgenstein feels that Winger has had a positive effect on his drumming with the Dregs. "When I was originally in the Dixie Dregs, I did not always consider the good feeling that music is supposed to have, and that the drums needed to be in more of a timekeeping position. I would hit every kick that the guitar, keyboards, violin, or bass did, sometimes forsaking the musicality. This time, I felt a much smoother flow. I certainly didn't play simple; there are a lot of notes. But even though the music goes through time changes and is very syncopated, it's easier to tap your foot to."

Rod is delighted to have both Winger and the Dixie Dregs to play in. (The Dregs' Capricorn contract calls for future studio releases.) "I feel really lucky," he smiles, "especially because the two bands are totally different in a lot of ways. After doing one for a long stretch, it's nice to do an about-face. It keeps everything fresh."

• ***Rick Mattingly***

Ralph Peterson

You may not realize that several of the tunes on the Ralph Peterson Fo'tet's new recording, *Ornettology,* are in odd times, because Peterson swings them in a way not usually associated with odd meters. "See," he explains, "there is a common multiple in odd meters. Once you find it, you can play through the song in four, as long as you have the concentration to hold it until it resolves.

The most dramatic example of that theory on *Ornettology* is "Status Flux," which is in 17/8. "Who says 17 can't swing?" Ralph laughs. "You have to play an entire 17-measure phrase in 17/8 before the ones meet, so everyone has to stay alert. But that's what makes the tune interesting."

Another nice feature of the tune is Ralph's drum solo, which the rest of the band members accompany the same way they would any other instrument's solo. Peterson feels it's only fair. "They don't want *me* to stop when *they* solo. They can color my stuff, too. They begin to hear drums in a different way when they try to comp to them."

All of which fits in with Peterson's concept of the drumset being a total musical instrument. "My kit has 12 tones in it," he points out. "The cymbals are matched and the drums have certain pitches and intervals, so there is a full capability of playing music—not just beating time, because everybody is responsible for time. It doesn't matter how much time I play if the other people ain't keeping time, too."

Besides his Fo'tet (so named because it has fo' members), Peterson's quintet is also active. He hopes to do a big band project in the near future as well, plus an album on which he will play trumpet—a talent he shows off briefly on the final track of *Ornettology.* "That was a precursor to doing a whole trumpet album," he explains, "which Jack Dejohnette has already agreed to play drums on." You can also hear Ralph on recent albums by Michelle Rosewoman and Charles Lloyd.

• ***Rick Mattingly***

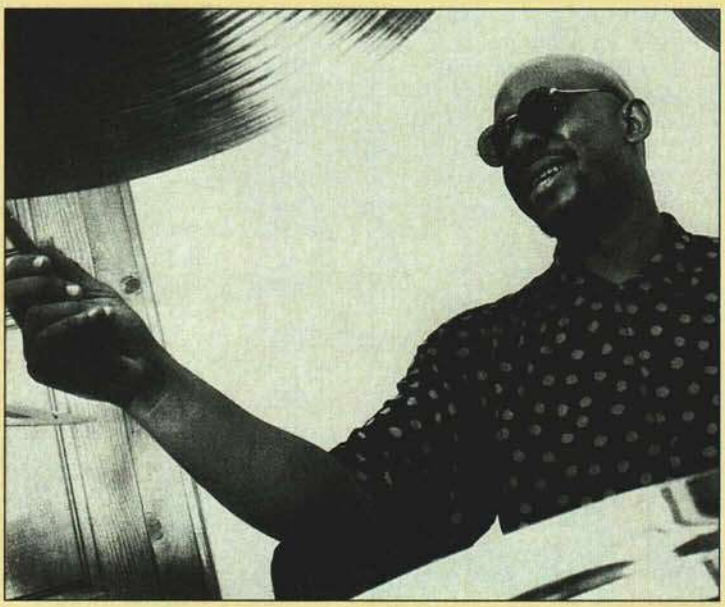

Photo by Lona Foote

Jay Dee Daugherty

Jay Dee Daugherty's strong rep comes from a resume that includes forming the infamous Mumps with school chum and current rock scribe Lance Loud, initiating the new wave movement with the Patti Smith Group, and recording with such artists as the Indigo Girls, Tom Verlaine, the Waterboys, and Willie Nile. Now add to that list joining Australia's the Church.

Jay's association with the Church came at an opportune time for both parties. Daugherty was looking for a group situation, while the band needed someone to replace original drummer Richard Ploog on the support tour for *Gold Afternoon Fix.* The members were familiar with Jay's work, so according to Daugherty his audition was more of a personality check, "to make sure that I wasn't an asshole."

When it came time to record the band's latest, *Priest = Aura,* Daugherty found himself in just the type of musical position he desired. "I was never given any instructions about what to do or what to play. I was very fortunate that they wanted me to do just what I do. On this record I was given free reign as a full member of the band to co-write and coproduce.

"I think they wisely chose me because of my background with bands that have a similar thread," Daugherty continues. "We're trying to accomplish something that is somewhat like a tunnel to the subconscious through music, taking risks and sometimes falling in order to try to get that one sublime moment. The Patti Smith Group was like that, sometimes on

record and *always* live. We were a jam band, like the Church. The way that the Church works, it's like four guys go into a room and the best note wins."

• ***John Gatta***

Roger Guth

St. Louis resident Roger Guth met up with Jimmy Buffet around four years ago when his band, P.M., was recording an album for Warner Bros. Their producer suggested they work with Buffet, and after they did so on his LP *Off To See The Lizard,* Buffet asked the trio to become his touring rhythm section.

"I think Jimmy was looking for somebody a little more youthful and high-energy," Roger explains. "We're not like Van Halen or anything, but we're more of a young-blood type thing. All three of us are also pretty varied musicians. We've all played with a lot of people, so we're easily adaptable to different styles."

Also in the band is percussionist Brie Howard and steel drummer Robert Greenidge. "With such a big band, everybody wants to play, but there's not room for it," Guth explains. "So simplicity is the key. My favorite tune of Jimmy's is one that doesn't even have drums on it, actually. It's called 'Changing Channels,' which is on *Off To See The Lizard.* There are a couple of reggae-inspired tunes that are fun to play, though. There's one called 'Fins,' which is an old one of his, but he kind of souped it up a little bit."

As usual, Buffet and band are gearing up for their traditional summer tour. "It's really great playing with Jimmy," says Roger. "Even in our present economy, he consistently sells out 30,000 seats every night." Of course there is still down time for Guth, but he keeps himself busy by playing with a local jazz band, doing jingles, and playing regionally with EM.

• ***Robyn Flans***

News...

Gregg Bissonette on new Joe Satriani record, as well as on tour with him this summer. There is also a new David Lee Roth album in the works.

Tom Roady playing percussion on albums by Jean Patrick Capedeville, Daryll Scott, Delbert McClinton, Mac MacAnally, Etta James (with Steve **Ferrone),** Maura O'Connor, Lorrie Morgan, Joe Ely, Beth Nielsen Chapman (with **Russ Kunkel),** and Suzy Boggus.

Tris Imboden on new Bill Champlin album, as well as playing and coproducing an album for Cecilia & the Wild Clams.

Paul Johnson, AKA **Moo-shi Moo moo**, on the road with Psychefunkapus.

Josh Freese on an album by Three Headed Mind Pollution.

Fred Coury in a new band tentatively called Taboo.

Slim Jim Phantom on tour with the Stray Cats, supporting their first album in four years, *Choo Choo Hot Fish.*

Peter Erskine's newest album, *Sweat Soul,* was recently released. He's also been on tour with the Manhattan Jazz Quartet. Peter can be heard on the new Vince Mendozza release, as well, and he'll be leading a trio date on ECM to be recorded in August.

Dave Weckl has a new album out called *On The Level.*

Brad Dutz and **Dave Karasony** on new Sub Media release. Dutz is also completing a solo album.

Gary Chaffee has been quite busy of late. He spent his first half of the year on tour in Europe with Mick Goodrick, also giving a few clinics along the way. In addition, he's recorded a duet with **Steve Smith** entitled "Seventh Heaven," and he's in the process of completing a new book on linear drumming.

Chuck Silverman recently shot his first instructional video, which is due out soon from D.C.I.

Mike Terrana on new Tony MacAlpine release, *Freedom To Fly.*

Ringo Starr recently released his first studio album in nine years, *Time Takes Time.* He is currently on tour with his All-Starr band.

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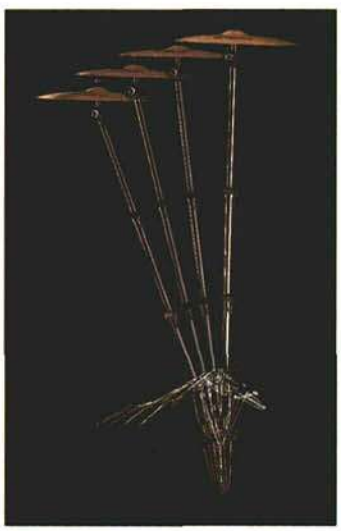

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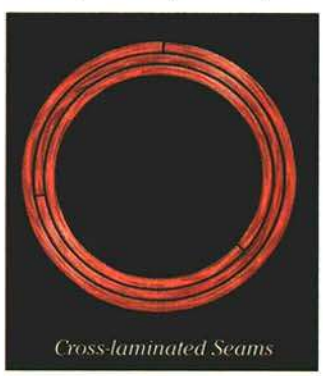

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Dave Lombardo

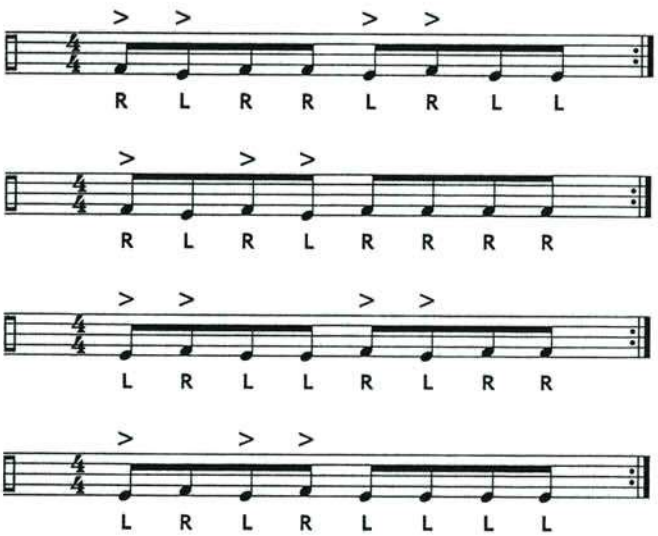
Q I can't say what an inspiration you are to me. Your drumming just completely blows me away! Here are my questions, in order of importance:

1. What are the models and sizes of your cymbals?
2. How could I build up to your hand and foot speed?
3. How can I find written drum music to your songs?
4. Can I still get my hands on *a Bloodpack* CD?
5. Is there still going to be a special edition *Decade Of Aggression* CD?
6. How can I find the words to the songs "Aggressive Perfector" and "Dissident Aggressor"?

Wes Beauregard
Greensburg PA

A Thanks for all the kind words. My Paiste cymbal setup includes a 22" *Dry Heavy Ride,* 16", 17", and 18" *Full Crashes,* an 18" *Power Crash,* and 15" *Sound Edge* heavy hi-hats—all from the *Paiste* ("Signature") series. I also use a 20" *Novo China* and an 18" China from the *3000* series, and a 22" 2002 China.

The best way to speed up your feet is to practice bass drum rudiments. Here's an exercise I use:



The same goes for your hands. Determination will pay off.

As far as drum music goes, there might be a drum song book for *Season In The Abyss,* but I'm not sure. The Slayer *Bloodpack* was a limited edition, and as far as I know they were all sold—but the *Decade Of Aggression* CD is available now. As for the lyrics you seek, you might be able to find "Aggressive Perfector" in one of the Slayer guitar songbooks. "Dissident Aggressor" was previously recorded by Judas Priest; it might be found in the songbook for their album *Sin After Sin.*

Louie Bellson

Q I've been playing swing and contemporary jazz for the past few years. I have always enjoyed your swinging playing and style, and since you are a swing master I would like to ask two questions. First, what is the essential difference between swing and bebop? Second, what is the role of the bass drum in each style?

Fernando Martin
Guatemala City, Guatemala

A In straight-ahead swing, you can use the bass drum on all four beats of the bar. Just make sure that *it's felt,* and not *heard.* In bebop, you can syncopate with the bass drum. Make it another voice. Drop "bombs" here and there. Just make sure you can hear the soloist and the rest of the rhythm section so you can put those syncopations in the right place.

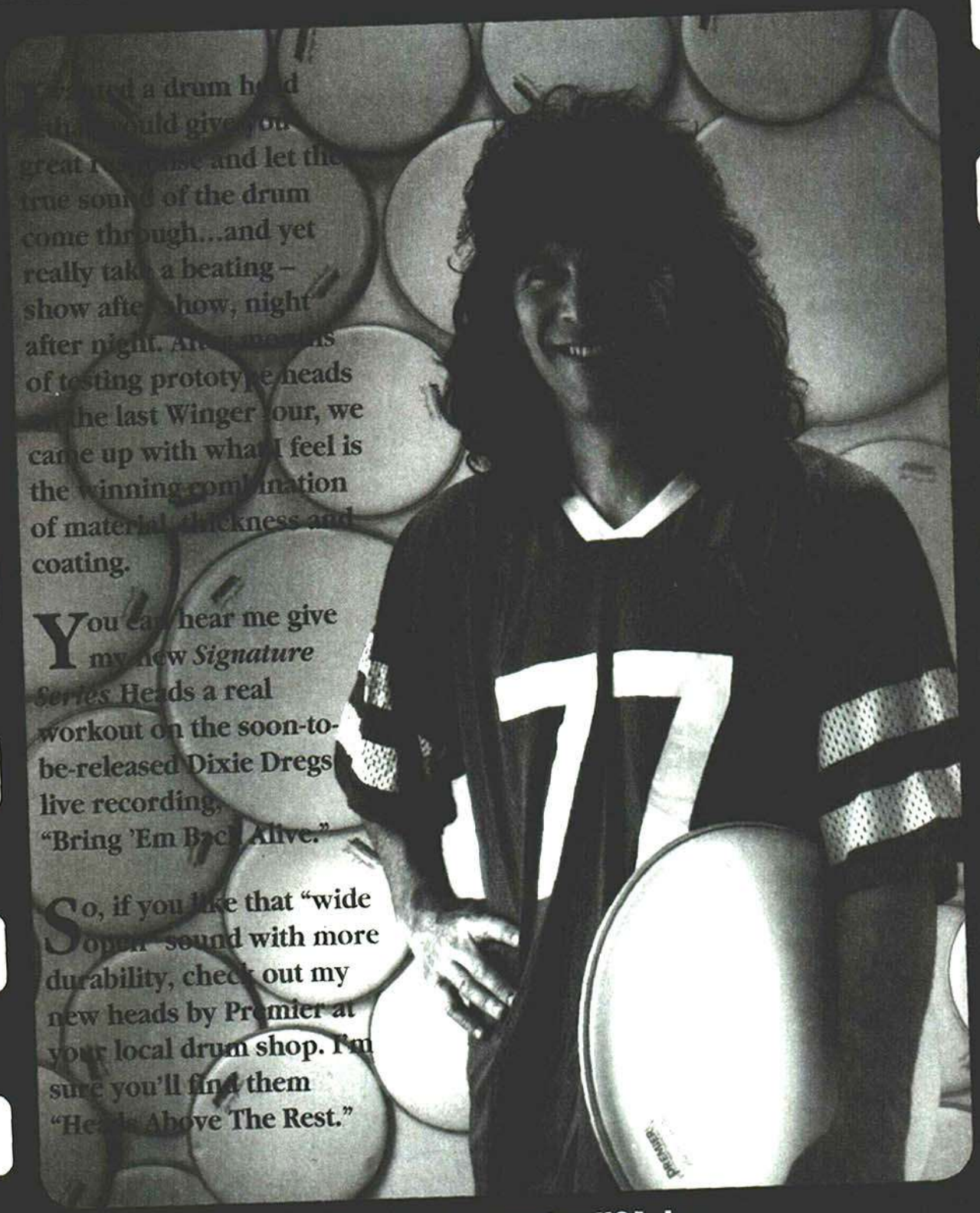
Gary Burton

Q On your album *A Genuine Tong Funeral,* the drumming is credited to "Lonesome Dragon." I always thought that was Bob Moses. Moses said it is not him. Who is "Lonesome Dragon"?

Russell Scarborough
Norfolk VA

A Although it's been 25 years since the recording of *A Genuine Tong Funeral,* I'll try to recall the details. Bob Moses would surely remember if he were "Lonesome Dragon," and far be it from me to question his statement. However, I certainly recall the drummer on that occasion bearing an uncanny *resemblance* to Moses, and therefore I just assumed it was probably him. Fortunately, the Moses look-alike also *played* remarkably well, so the music was very enjoyable.

Heads Above The Rest



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...ould give you
great ...se and let the
true sou... of the drum
come th...ough...and yet
really tak... a beating –
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after night. An... months
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came up with what I feel is
the winning combination
of material, thickness and
coating.

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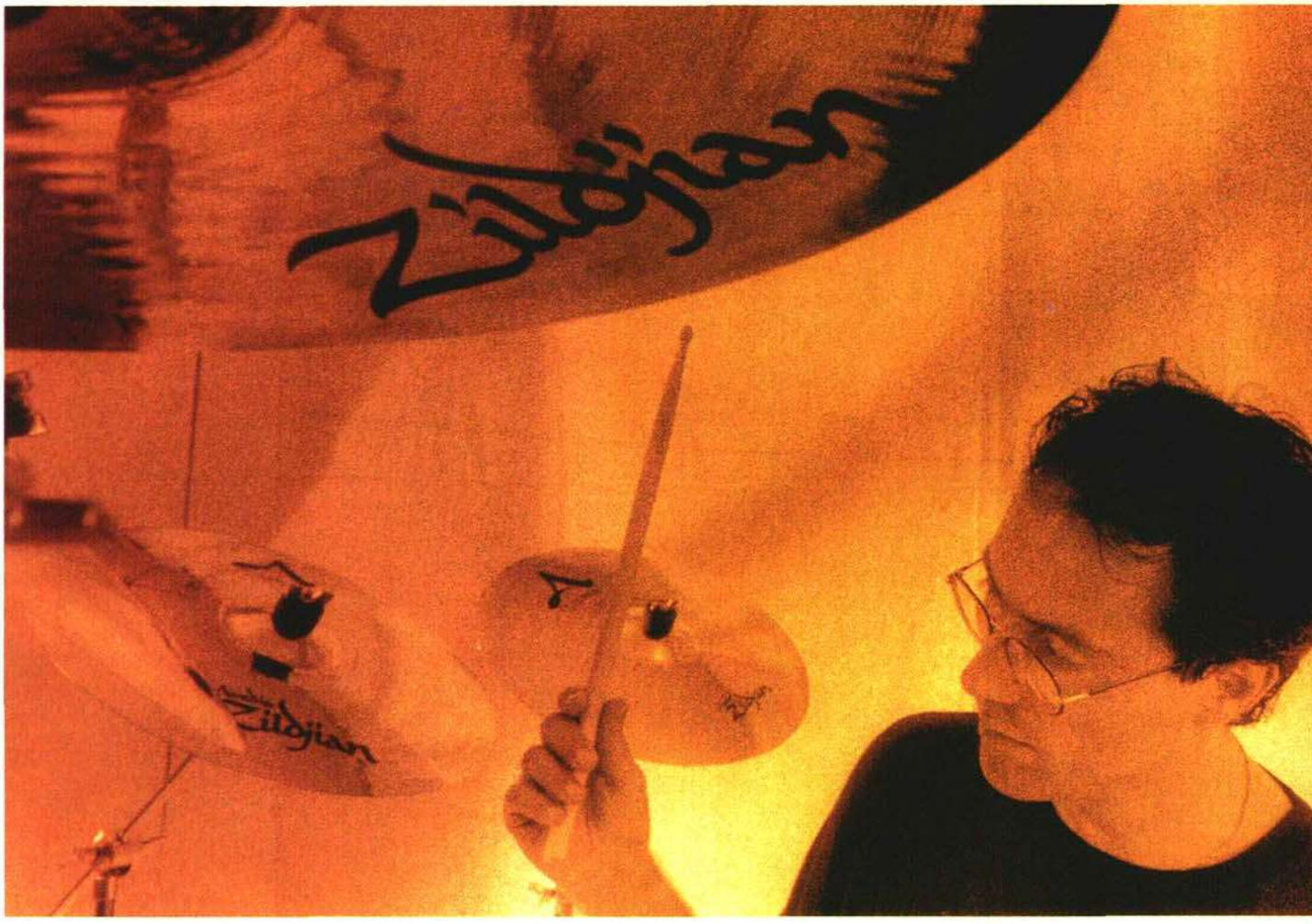

"ZILDJIAN TOOK THESE SO

Vinnie Colaiuta had a clear picture in his mind of what his dream cymbal would be. "It would have a 'sweet' sound," explained Vinnie. "Not too dark. Not too light. Sort of in-between, but not bland and not middle-of-the-road. It would be a thin cymbal with more spread than a thicker cymbal, but not too much more.

The A Custom.

When I hit the bell, it wouldn't go 'ching-ching' like a cash register. It would open up as soon as I touched it. I could even hit it with my finger and it would still sound good. It would speak to me. In a nutshell, the cymbal would be strongly reminiscent of the old Zildjian A, but with a more contemporary feel." Interestingly,

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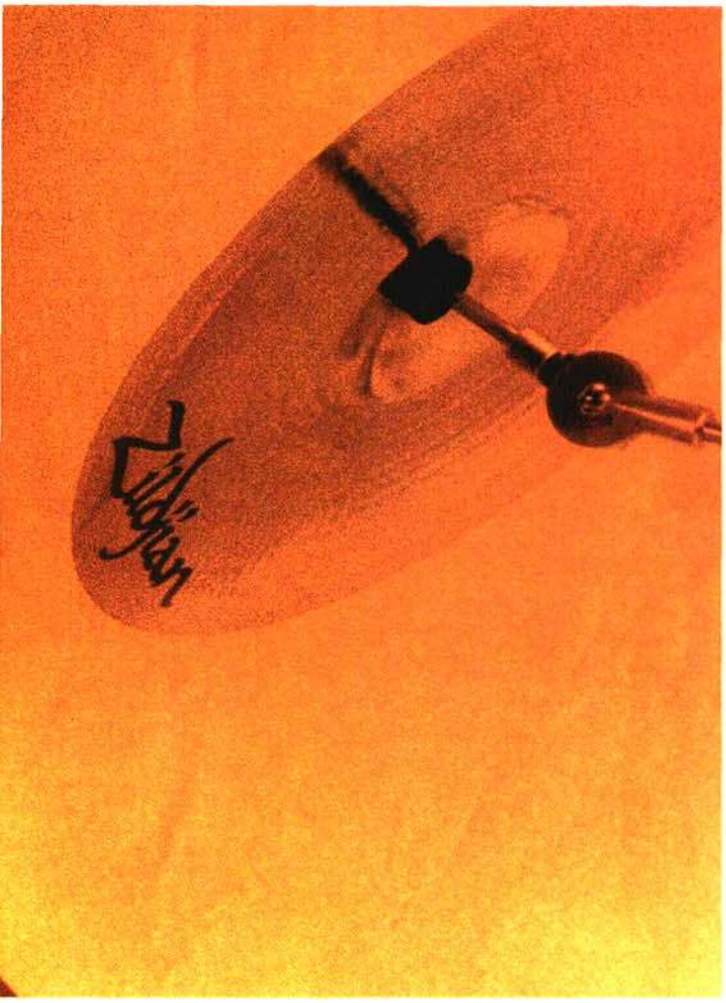
For a new Vinnie Colaiuta poster please send $5.00 for postage and handling to Zildjian.



us field test. And after a lengthy process of playing, listening, and perfecting, we produced the new A Custom. We're thrilled with the cymbal because we believe it's the finest sounding A Cymbal we've made to date. And it should be. New computer techniques enabled us to analyze how minute variations in hammering patterns affected the sonics. And our exclusive rotary hammering device allowed us to create never-achieved-before nuances in sound. The A Custom is a complete range of cymbals with 14" Hi hats, 15," 16," 17" and 18" crashes, and

UNDS OUT OF MY HEAD."

several months prior to this discussion with Vinnie, we had already begun working on a cymbal with similar qualities, as an extension to the classic A Zildjian sound. We decided to join forces and create this new generation of cymbal together. We enlisted Dennis Chambers, Steve Smith, Neil Peart, William Calhoun and Omar Hakim, amongst others, to help

20" and 22" rides. To learn more about them, please write Zildjian at 22 Longwater Drive, Norwell, MA 02061. As a parting note, we'd like to thank all the artists involved in creating the A Custom. Especially Vinnie. Because when we sat down to work, his head was into it the most.

Zildjian

CYMBAL MAKERS SINCE 1623.

Q Is This Ludwig Kit A Collectible?

I have a 12-piece Ludwig Black Marine Pearl kit that I bought used. It's a double-kick set, and the drums and chrome are in excellent condition. I was told it was a '60s kit, but the badges on the drums are the newer Ludwig design with the blue and green background. I'd like to know more about my kit, and find out if it's worth anything special—since Black Marine Pearl kits are fetching a higher price these days.

Jess Hagaman
Seminole FL

A Ludwig's Ward Durrett replies, "The outfit you mention was built between 1974 and 1984, as denoted by the green-and-blue badges. I'm afraid your set falls into the same value category as most pre-owned kits, in that they're worth what any other party is willing to pay for them. The fact that they are covered in Black Marine Pearl (or what Ludwig calls Black Diamond Pearl) does not automatically put them in any different value category—except to an individual who is particularly interested in drums with that finish."

Q How Can Cymbals Be Protected Against Salt Air?

I recently bought a 19" K Zildjian China cymbal. I live close to the ocean, and it seems that the salt air loves my new treasure. Is there anything I can do to protect my cymbals from the corrosive effects of the salt, and at the same time keep them looking new?

John Kurimai
Newport Beach CA

A According to Lennie DiMuzio of Zildjian: "All Zildjian cymbals have one of two different types of finish on them. One is the regular finish, and the other is the *Brilliant* finish. If your particular cymbal has the regular finish on it, it is coated lightly with a thin spray of protective polyurethane. This will keep your cymbal very clean with minimal upkeep. After about a year, the coating will start to wear off, and you will have to clean the cymbal a little more often. If the cymbal has a *Brilliant* finish to it, it is not coated with polyurethane, and you'll have to clean it a bit more often.

"Salt and humidity can cause damage to cymbals, so you should wipe off any moisture that has accumulated after each use, and store the cymbals in a bag or case away from the salt air. It is important to keep the cymbals dry, since this will prevent them from tarnishing. Finally, do not coat cymbals with any type of household chemicals, as this could reduce their sound qualities."

Q Can A Cowbell Be Repainted?

I have a Premier cowbell that's in bad shape. I completely stripped it down and tried to repaint it. I have since stripped it again, because the top part of the bell is made of aluminum and the paint didn't hold. What type of paint can I use to repaint the bell? Could a local auto body shop do it better? Or should I send the bell to Premier to do the job?

Todd Egger
Selinsgrove PA

A We checked with Premier regarding your problem. They responded by explaining the process by which your bell was first painted. According to Frank Coleman, foreman of the spray shop at Premier's Leicester, England factory, the "naked" cowbell is first coated by an "etching" primer (that is, a special paint that actually soaks into the metal) and baked at 120° centigrade. This first coat allows the main coat of paint (which is called "stove enamel") to adhere to the surface of the bell. Once the main coat is applied, the bell is baked (or "stoved") once more for a further 40 minutes. This hardens the paint and makes it more resistant to chipping.

Premier goes on to say that simply repainting your bell won't work, because (as you discovered) the paint can't adhere to the surface of the metal without it first being re-primered. But the company does not suggest that you send the bell back to them to be repainted, since the cost would be prohibitive. They point out that you could buy a new bell at a fraction of the price.

Q How Can The Los Lobotomys CD Be Obtained?

Your April issue featured a drum solo by Vinnie Colaiuta taken from a CD by Los Lobotomys. I've been unable to locate that CD. Can you help?

Jeff Easthope
Gaithersburg MD

A The CD is available as a Japanese import on Sohbi Records, catalog number SFB1002. In addition to Vinnie, Jeff Porcaro and Carlos Vega also played on the recording, so it's certainly worth searching for. (Our thanks to *MD* reader Doug Corrigan for tracking down this info.)

Q Who Sells The Drum Torque?

I'd like to know if the *Drum Torque* tuning device still exists, and if so, how I might obtain one.

John Fitzpatrick
Shark River Hills NJ

A The *Drum Torque* is still available. It is now being assembled and distributed by Calato Manufacturing (makers of Regal Tip drumsticks and other products). You could check with any music dealer that handles Calato products and ask them to order a *Drum Torque* for you, or contact the company directly at 4501 Hyde Park Blvd., Niagara Falls, NY 14305, (716) 285-2546.

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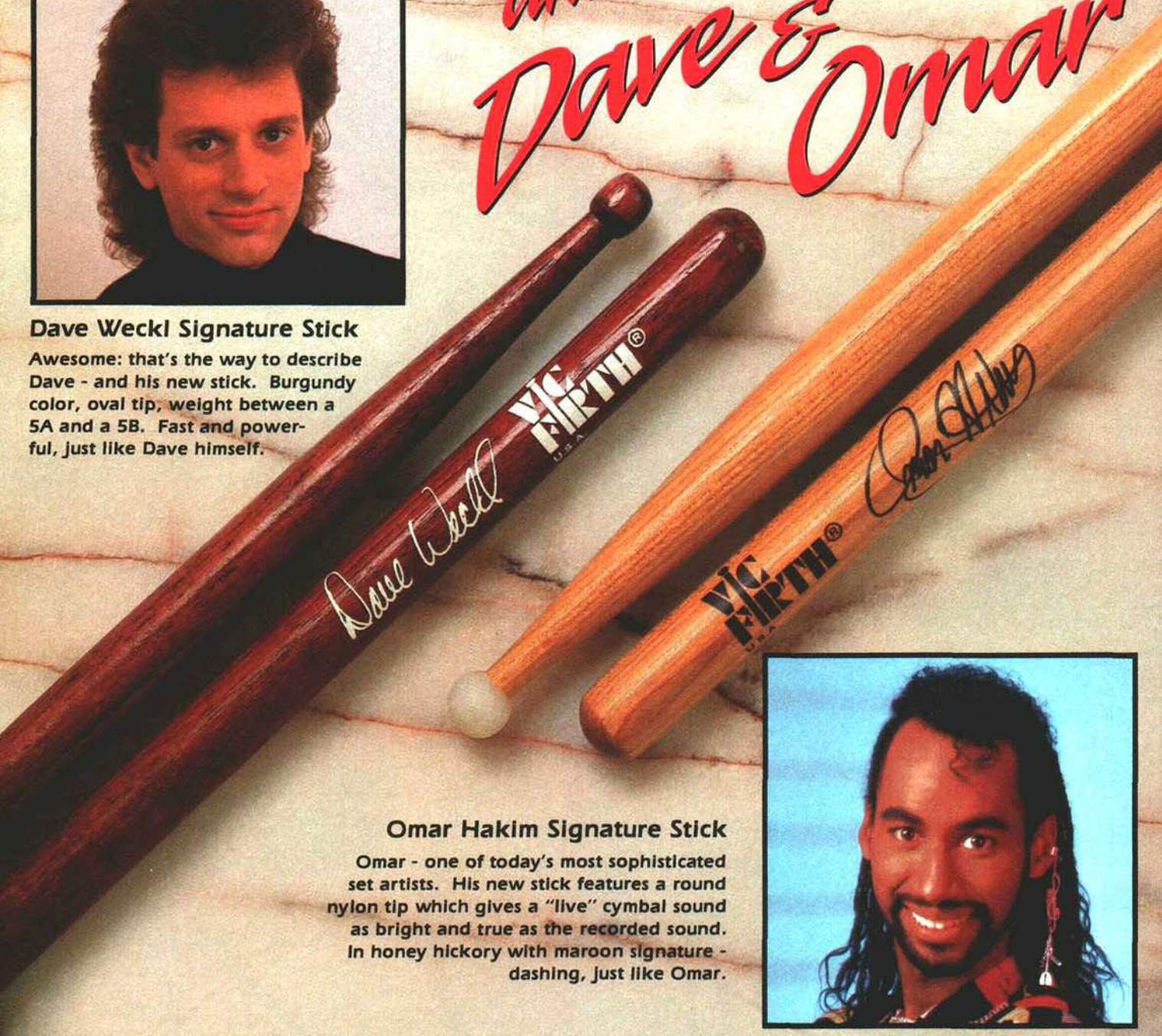

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1956 Corvette. Photo courtesy of General Motors.

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Andy Newmark On...

by Ken Micallef

"The term 'studio musician' is obsolete in New York City in 1992—at least as far as drummers are concerned. Right now, there is no such thing as making a living here exclusively in recording studios. That is not a complaint, it's just a fact. Speaking as one who never made my living in this town, even during the best of times, I am not affected all that much by the present drought in New York City. Though I always wanted to work here, it never worked out that way. So I pushed open new doors elsewhere. The way things are now, maybe that was a blessing in disguise. I'm grateful that I can still make a living playing the drums. It's brutal out there."

So says Andy Newmark, who, during the '70s and '80s, achieved worldwide recognition for his impact playing with rock's elite. His unique feel and inventive groove playing has brought him to the forefront, recording and/or touring with artists such as John Lennon, Sly & the Family Stone, Carly Simon, Roxy Music, Ron Wood and Keith Richards, David Bowie, George Harrison, Steve Winwood, Carole King, James Taylor, Randy Newman, and many others.

Andy's most current work can be found on upcoming albums by Bryan Ferry, English pop group World Party, and new-wave country songwriter Mary Chapin Carpenter.

...Steve Gadd

Bob Malach: "Mood Swing" (from Mood *Swing)* Gadd, drums; Malach, tenor sax; Will Lee, bass; Russ Ferrante, keyboards; Robben Ford, guitar; Tom Harrell, flugelhorn;

AN: It sounds like early Steve Gadd. I can tell by the drum sound, and his feel.

KM: It's Gadd with Bob Malach.

AN: This is really the essence of Steve Gadd, isn't it? There is a straight-ahead bebop quarter-note groove on the ride cymbal, but underneath that you have a half-time, real lazy backbeat going throughout on the third beat of each bar. Steve keeps both mentalities alive simultaneously. The quarter notes from "Bopworld" have that triplet swing thing, and the backbeats from "Planet 8th Note" are giving it that heavy anchor. You can hang your hat on those relaxed backbeats. He blends both worlds, being very credible with either style.

Steve is an institution. When you see him play he makes it all make sense. The reason it always works is because Steve is playing Steve. He's probably the first guy to understand and have a genuine feel for rock *and* pop—and have the technical facility and feel of a jazz drummer as well. He's an original—poetry in motion.

...Tom Brechtlein

Brandon Fields: "You Got it" (from Other *Places)* Brechtlein, drums; Fields, saxes; Walt Fowler, trumpet; Bruce Fowler, trombone; David Garfield, keyboards; Jimmy Johnson, bass

AN: This has a Billy Cobham vibe to it, with a more genuine funk-rock feel. I know it's not Billy, though.

KM: It's Tom Brechtlein.

AN: I have heard of Tom, but I must confess I'm not familiar with his playing. Someone who plays like this should be everywhere. He sounds incredible on this track. Fantastic, rudimental-sounding chops, extra-terrestrial funk grooves, and so much fire.

I always wonder when I hear someone playing in this bionic funk mode—with all the incredible chops—if they can settle into a nice, secure, simple pocket. To what extent a player can or can't do that is not a matter to be judgmental about. I simply wonder, when I hear certain types of drumming, how broad that drummer's spectrum is—not technically, but emotionally. In this particular case, my instincts say that Tom would be able to lay it down, solid and simple. I say that because there seems to be a soulfulness to his playing. Though he is displaying a lot of chops, I still feel a genuine funkiness coming through it all. The notes are believable to me. Yeah, Tom!

...Jeff Porcaro

James Newton Howard: "Tandori Borealis" (from *James Newton Howard And Friends)* Porcaro, drums; Howard, keyboards; David Paich, keyboards; David Hungate, bass

AN: This music has a progressive vibe to it, but I must say the drummer sounds like a genuine rocker, not a fusion drummer.

KM: It's one of your contemporaries.

AN: Jeff Porcaro?

KM: Yes.

AN: It's certainly not the type of music that I associate Jeff with, but since you told me it's him, now I can hear that it's Jeff, alright. He and I probably came from the same tribe a thousand years ago. We worked for Western Union, sending out messages on logs. Our approach is similar—simple, a lot of feel, emphasis on the vibe, minimal notes. As I was listening, I'm thinking, "This is not a fusion drummer." Those guys would have been a lot busier within that 6/8 groove section, playing all through it, around it, under it.... They'd have made a meal of it, improvising throughout. Jeff took it the opposite way. He came up with a definite part that worked and made the track sit right down.

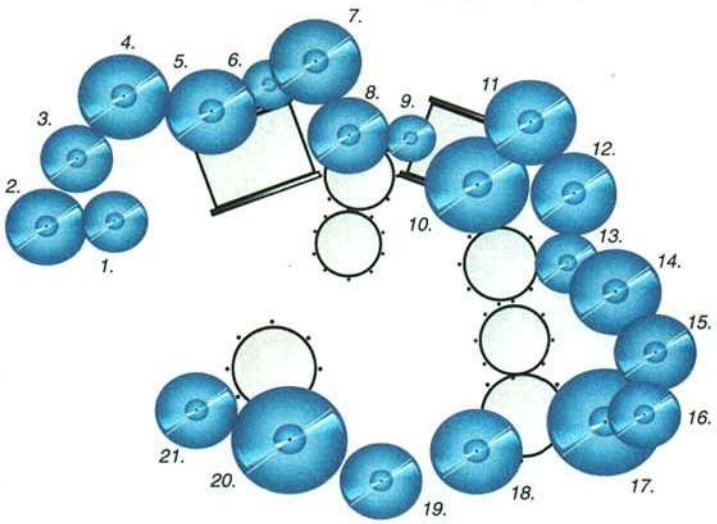
continued on page 98

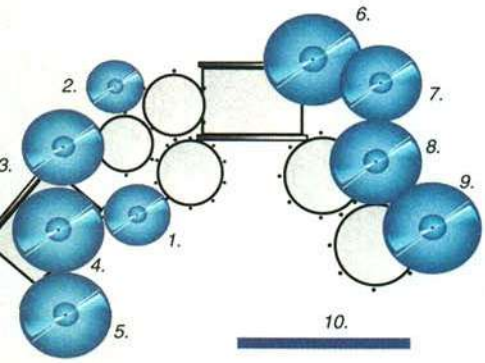
ROBERT SWEET

"When it comes to cymbals, there's only one number one, and that's Paiste!"

Favorite Recordings
Rock the Hell Out of You
Against the Law/Stryper
Not That Kind of Guy
Against the Law/Stryper
Soldiers Under Control
Soldiers Under Control

Cymbal Set Up
1) 14" Paiste Line Sound Edge Hi-Hat
2) 18" 3000 Crash
3) 16" Paiste Line Fast Crash
4) 20" Paiste Line Thin China
5) 20" Paiste Line Full Crash
6) 12" Paiste Line Bell
7) 20" Paiste Line Bright Ride
8) 18" 3000 Reflector Crash
9) 10" Paiste Line Splash
10) 22" Paiste Line Power Ride
11) 20" Sound Creation Dark China
12) 19" 3000 Power Crash
13) 13" Paiste Line Sound Edge Hi-Hat
14) 20" 2000 Colorsound Turquoise Crash
15) 18" Paiste Line Fast Crash
16) 16" 3000 Reflector Crash
17) 24" 2002 Ride
18) 20" 3000 Reflector Crash
19) 18" 2000 Colorsound Turquoise Crash
20) 24" 3000 Reflector Crash
21) 18" 3000 Power Crash





GREG D'ANGELO

"To put it quite simply . . . Nothing compliments the sound of drums like Paiste cymbals. I've never been disappointed!"

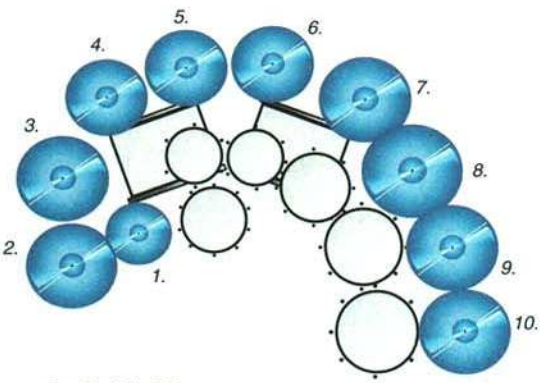
Favorite Recordings:
Farm Fiddlin
Zach Wylde
Radar Love
Big Game/White Lion
One Way Out
Lynrd Skinhayd

Cymbal Set Up
1) 14" Formula 602 Extra Heavy Hi-Hat
2) 12" Paiste Line Splash
3) 18" Paiste Line Power Crash
4) 20" Paiste Line Power Crash
5) 20" 3000 Novo China
6) 22" Paiste Line Power Ride
7) 18" Paiste Line Power Crash
8) 20" Paiste Line Power Crash
9) 22" 2002 Novo China
10) 40" Symphonic Gong

MIKKEY DEE

"I feel lucky and proud to play and represent Paiste cymbals. To me, Paiste stands for the ultimate sound, I even think they sound good just to look at!"

Favorite Recordings:
Abigail
King Diamond
Them
King Diamond
Up From the Ashes
Don Dokken



Cymbal Set Up
1) 14" Paiste Line Sound Edge Hi-Hat
2) 19" Paiste Line Power Crash
3) 20" Paiste Line Full Crash
4) 18" Paiste Line Heavy China
5) 18" Paiste Line Full Crash
6) 18" Paiste Line Full Crash
7) 20" Paiste Line Heavy China
8) 22" Paiste Line Power Ride
9) 20" Paiste Line Full Crash
10) 19" Paiste Line Power Crash

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MICKEY CURRY

By Robyn Flans

"During the '80s, Mickey Curry was the drummer on many of Hall & Oates' biggest hits. Today, in between recording and touring with Bryan Adams, he plays with the cream of the pop and rock crop: Steve Winwood, David Bowie, Elvis Costello, Richard Thompson, the Cult, Alice Cooper, Carly Simon, Cher, Tina Turner.... It seems wherever you turn, it's Curry who's getting the primo calls. So what does a guy like Mickey Curry have to fret about?

Photos By Ebet Roberts

Mickey Curry was thinking he might as well just go home. And if it weren't for his staunch sense of commitment, he'd do just that—because the last few days of sessions had become a *nightmare.* Mickey couldn't seem to do anything right. He had done the Cult's *Sonic Temple* album in 1988 with producer Bob Rock, but this one, *Ceremony,* produced by Richie Zito, was proving to be entirely different.

"Bob kind of goes for the performance at the time, and if you get a great take, he would rather leave it alone, even if there are mistakes on it," Curry explains. "If anything is radically wrong, then you can fix it, but Bob goes for the performance. And he also gets a great sound—a very live, ambient drum sound, which he applies to whatever project he's working on. But Richie makes very commercial records. Initially we tried to go for making pop songs and getting the hits, but the songs just didn't lend themselves to that, and [guitarist] Billy Duffy and [singer] Ian Astbury were both kind of fighting the commercial aspect of it."

Duffy and Astbury were also having a heck of time trying to communicate what they wanted. They seemed to know what they *didn't* want—and the things they were getting, they didn't want. Mickey couldn't help but begin to take it personally. Nothing was gelling, and the vibe was tense. With all of that, though, Curry is glad he stuck it out. "It really had nothing to do with me," he says. "It was just Billy and Ian having the problem of following up a big record. That pressure is incredible. Seeing guys go through that is not easy.

"We used three different drumkits in the first four days, just trying to get a sound they were happy with," Curry continues. "We first got the big-room, rock drum sound, kind of what I'm used to getting, but they hated it. They wanted something drier and wetter sounding. A 'wet' drum sound to me always sounds like you're hitting a pillow or something stretchy or soft, like a snare drum with a really loose head. 'Dry' would mean flat with no echo and absolutely no effects. We ended up changing drumkits, moving them in the room, and using different heads. We did a lot of experimenting with mic' placement and stuff like that.

"We ended up with kind of an early '70s thing—dry and flat—but really Upfront, as opposed to ambient and spacial. We used bigger toms, a bigger kick drum, *Emperor* heads, and fewer mic's. We didn't close-mike anything. We just used a couple of overheads. I was really happy with it once we got rolling. It was just difficult to try to second-guess what they wanted. They knew what they wanted to hear, but they just didn't know how to tell it to me. Unfortunately, when there's something wrong, I'm one of those people who always thinks that it's me."

Mickey isn't alone. In fact, most professionals experience what is known as the Imposture Syndrome, the fear that you really are an impostor and will eventually be found out. It's a phenomenon so common that psychology magazines publish stories about it often. It's just that few people are honest enough to admit they've experienced it.

"My biggest fear—and maybe I'm being too open here—but I'm always afraid that I won't be taken like a

legitimate guy. I don't want to come off like a phony. It's like, when are these people going to realize that I'm not the guy they want? 'Call Jeff Porcaro, because he's the guy, or call Jim Keltner, because he's legitimate.'

"When I went to Nashville recently to work on David Mullen's record, I had never met any of the people, and I thought, 'I ain't gonna cut it.' These guys hired me because they think I'm some hot-shot guy. But I'm going to get there and not make it.' And for the first three hours of setting up and getting drum sounds, I was a wreck. That is the biggest fear for me: that I'm going to get into a situation where I won't live up to what it's supposed to be or that I won't come up with that new legendary drum fill that everyone wants me to come up with."

Fortunately for Mickey, the Mullen project turned out to be a great personal success. He does, however, recall one incident where he *didn't* cut it. "It still bothers me to this day," Curry admits. "I got a call in 1986 to do a track for David Sanborn's *A Change Of Heart* album. Phillipe Saisse was producing, and David had written this thing that was really complicated. They had a chart for me, and David, [bassist] Anthony Jackson, and I spent all day on it, but I just couldn't cut it. It was too complicated for me.

"After that," Mickey says, "I made it a point to get my reading chops together, but at the time, I didn't even think about reading. I'm sure if I went in now, I could do it and it would be fine, but at the time my reading was bad, and I also thought I had to give them exactly what was on the chart, note for note. If I had approached it from a different angle, I could have played something and made it work. But I didn't do that. We ended up programming a drum part and putting my samples on it.

"It was really embarrassing for me, but David made me feel fine about it, like everything was okay, and he thanked me for coming down. And six months later, they sent me a gold record, which was so cool. I'll never forget that. That's the kind of stuff that makes you feel good about working with people. It could have been disastrous, but he made it fine.

"On a few projects after that," Mickey says, "I made sure people had stuff charted for me. I'd take the demos and the charts and go through them, practicing putting things together. I also have a friend in Connecticut, Mo Potts, who is a drummer who helps me now and then with things. He teaches, and he's good at breaking things down and simplifying them. Every now and then I'll run over to his place and say, 'Help me with this.'"

Practicing—when time permits—helps Curry in the variety of work he gets called for. But some situations call for a little *more* than technical ability. "I played on a Tom Waits album called *Downtown Train* back in '81," Mickey recalls. "On the title track, he couldn't describe how he wanted the drums, so he described everything in colors. He was saying, 'There's a kind of a green here and then a red here. I want that kind of brown thing in the middle.' It was unbelievable. But do you know what? I got it. I don't know how, because I really didn't think I understood at the time. But I came up with an idea where I would tune everything really low and play with mallets, and he loved it. I don't think it's a great drum track; it's kind of crappy, actually. But describing

Choice Curry

Here are the records Mickey lists as the most representative of his drumming.

Album Title	Artist	Label/Catalog #
Faded Blues	David Mullen	Warner Bros. 26591-2
Amnesia	Richard Thompson	Capitol C21Y-48845
Into The Fire	Bryan Adams	A&M 75021-3313-2
Live At The Apollo	Hall & Oates	RCA PCD1-7035
The Talking Animals	T-Bone Burnett	Columbia FCT-40792
Sonic Temple	The Cult	Sire 25871-2
King Of America	Elvis Costello	Columbia CK-40173

And here are the ones he listens to most for inspiration.

Album Title	Artist	Drummer	Label/Catalog #
Spectrum	Billy Cobham	Billy Cobham	Atlantic 7268-2
Chicago I	Chicago	Danny Seraphine	Columbia PCT-36105
Chicago II	Chicago	Danny Seraphine	Columbia CGT-00024
Houses Of The Holy	Led Zeppelin	John Bonham	Atlantic SD-19130
The Point	Harry Nilsson	Jim Keltner/ Jim Gordon	RCA 2593-2-R
Layla	Derek & The Dominos	Jim Gordon	RSO823277-2
The Royal Scam	Steely Dan	Bernard Purdie/ Rick Marotta	MCA MCAD-31193
Pretzel Logic	Steely Dan	Jeff Porcaro/ Jim Gordon	MCA MCAD-31165
Elektric Band	Chick Corea	Dave Weckl	GRP GRD9535

sound is not an easy thing."

The Richard Thompson records Mickey's recorded, *Daring Adventure* (1986), *Amnesia* (1988), *and Rumor And Sigh* (1991), also come to mind when Mickey contemplates the diversity of music he plays. "With Richard, I get to bash on a couple of things and then do a couple of really creative, interesting things. Jim Keltner always gets the really good tunes, though," he laughs. "And then I listen to the records, and Jim always plays so beautifully that I go, 'What am I doing on the same record as this guy?' On these records [produced by Mitchell Froom], though, they go more for getting an emotion or a feeling, as opposed to just stomping out a solid drum part. A lot of that stuff is setting moods and tones. It doesn't necessarily mean playing kick, snare, and hi-hat. There's a lot more expression through different sounds. I don't necessarily play a drumkit.

"I can remember doing a couple of things on *Amnesia* where I just tapped on my knees with my hand, and we put a mic' there. That was one of the percussion parts. I was doing a Sam Phillips record at the same time [produced by T-Bone Burnette], and we were getting into some really strange things like taking two snare drums and slamming them together. We'd also have these little noisemakers and whistles and plastic tubes, which, when you spin them around, make sounds.

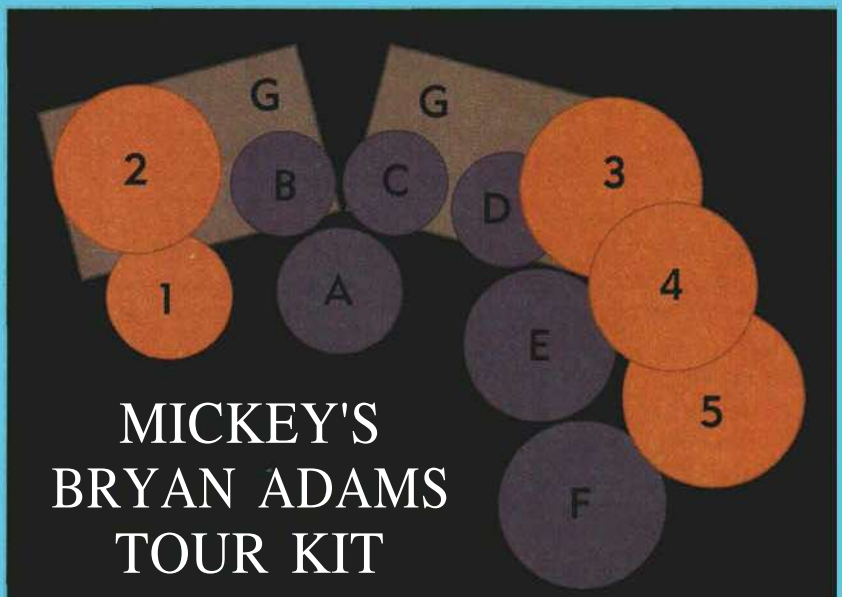
"T-Bone and Mitchell are kind of pals, and they both come up with some strange things. If noisemakers are laying around the room, then that's what we'll use. It's a different brain. It's not me going in and thinking about snare drum sounds. It's going in and thinking about an actual part for this song to get the guy's point across. We have fun, and I just give them whatever it is that they need to hear."

In fact, Alice Cooper once said one of the reasons he enjoyed working with Curry so much on *Hey Stoopid* was because of Curry's great sense of humor. "Uncle Alice," Curry laughs. "He used to come to the session every day with little goodies like cannolis and dole them out. He's one of my favorite people. He made me laugh more than anyone. He's a wonderful person, and he just let me go; whatever I wanted to do was fine with him. We went through pre-production without a hitch, and then when we got into the studio, all the tracks were two or three takes at the most. Some were first takes.

"I wanted to keep that album rock," Curry continues. "I wanted to be true to my own simplistic playing. When I have to come up with innovative, creative things, I kind of choke because I'm not really good under pressure. But I played the less-is-more theory and just did what felt right. I kept the fills to a minimum. My main concern was getting a good sound because we were at Bearsville—which is a great room for recording drum sounds—and I wanted to make sure we got as much out of that room as we could.

"We got a big rock drum sound. Peter Collins was producing, and the first day in, we set up the drums, placed the mic's, and taped some stuff. We got a great sound immediately, which was really encouraging, because sometimes you get in and it takes forever, like on the Cult record. And we just went from there. We had the songs so well rehearsed that the timing was perfect. We got into the studio just as the energy level was right. Everybody knew the material, but we weren't fried on it, and we just played."

How *does* Curry get his famous rock sound? "I like to use as much of the room as we can get. Ambience always works well. Compression also works well because my left hand always drags on the drum after I hit the backbeat. It takes away from the groove. So for the big backbeat, we use as much of the room as we can get and then we compress the close mic's so that all the little drags and stuff are down underneath. That helps a lot for the way things groove for me.



MICKEY'S BRYAN ADAMS TOUR KIT

Drumset: Yamaha in custom champagne sparkle finish

A. 7 x 14 birch-shell snare drum
B. 8 x 10 tom
C. 10 x 10 tom
D. 10 x 12 tom
E. 16 x 16 floor tom
F. 16 x 18 floor tom
G. 16 x 22 bass drum

Hardware: All Yamaha 900 series

Sticks: Regal 7B

Cymbals: Zildjian
1. 15" *New Beat* hi-hats
2. 17" A Custom crash
3. 21" A medium-thin ride (with big bell)
4. 18" A Custom crash
5. 19" A medium-thin crash

Heads: Remo CS. *Black Dot* on snare, clear *Ambassadors* on tops and bottoms of toms, *Pinstripes* on bass drum batters with coated *Ambassadors* on front

"Every record is different. It depends on the project. On most of the rock records, I use a 22" or 24" kick drum. I have a whole variety of snare drums, although I've been using a brass piccolo snare on a lot of projects. It's just kind of like a gunshot, really loud and bright. I also have an old Ludwig 8" that I have used on certain things. It has a wood shell with a metal finish. I use mostly small rack toms because they get the attack—especially now in the studio, where sounds can be fabricated or enhanced. If you need a bigger sound, you can usually add reverb." As a footnote, Mickey adds that he OD'd a bit on the Hall & Oates electronic revolution while he was playing with them from 1981 through 1986. Since then, he's tried to stay as acoustic as possible.

Although Curry uses double bass drums with Bryan Adams live, he says that he rarely uses them in the studio. "I did use a double pedal on the Alice Cooper record on a couple of things, and on the *Sonic Temple* record I used two bass drums on a couple of tracks. With Bryan, it's such a visual thing. Kids don't just want to see a band on stage. They want to see a show, and you have to do things a little bit bigger than life. Back in the Hall & Oates days, when they were having lots of hits, I thought I'd go with a bigger drumkit. It looks great, and at the same time, I was using the left kick drum to trigger different sounds.

"I've gotten to the point now where I get out on the big stage and need the setup I've got. I'm really comfortable with it. I don't play a lot of stuff with the double bass with Bryan, but I do get to use it every now and then, and it's fun to do. It's just another drum to play, and it opens up a whole groove thing. You get a lot of bottom end, and it's fun to play.

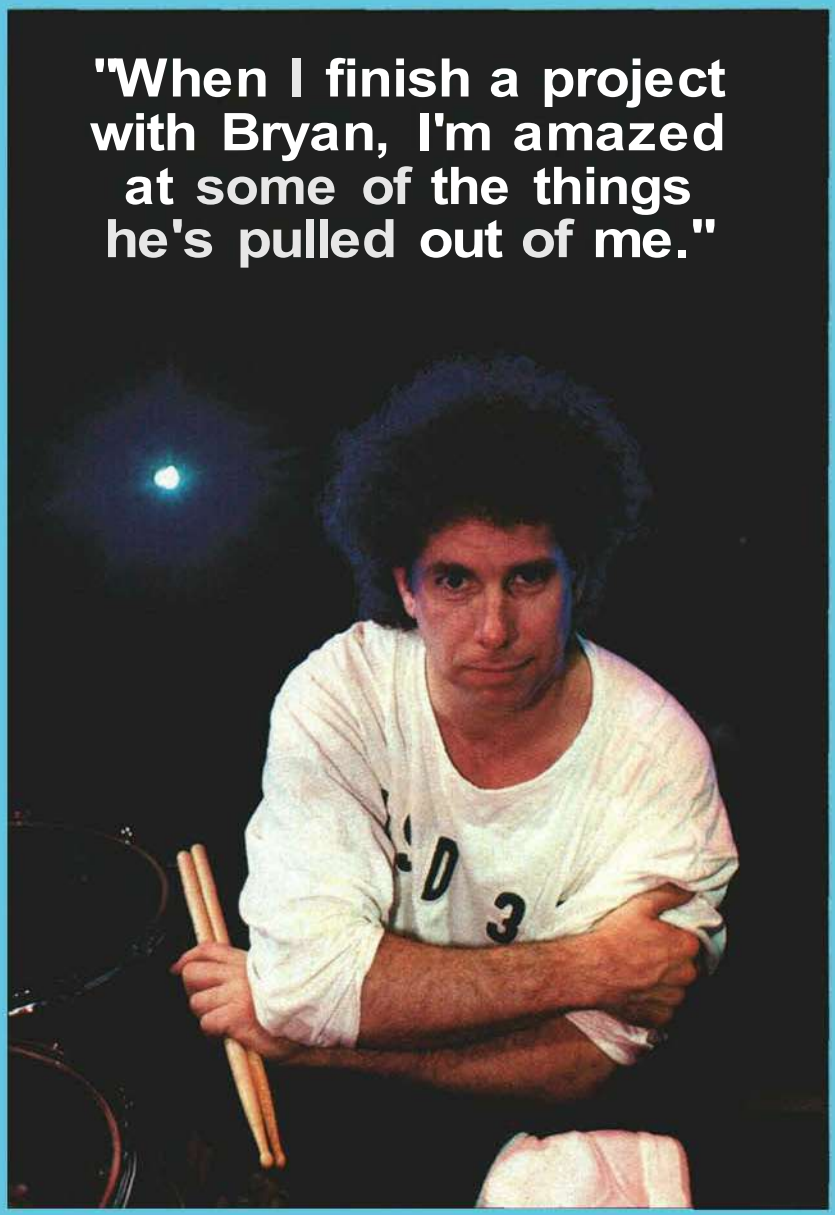
"Once I started going out with Bryan in '87," Mickey says, "I would spend some extra time just working out parts and trying to get rhythms and patterns together that I could apply. Bryan is not a big fan of double bass. His music really doesn't warrant that kind of thing, but it's fun to just throw the stuff in every once in a while. In my spare time, I like to work on it."

Curry says that he has always relied on teaching himself. He didn't have much luck finding a teacher as a youngster and hated the emphasis on classical music in his elementary school. In fact, he went through about eight teachers in four years, until his senior year in high school, when he found Nick Forte, who gave him free rein.

"Ned Tarrantino was my first teacher and the guy who kind of started me on drums," Curry recalls. "I studied with the music teachers in school, and it was just really basic rudiments and simple sticking. But I always wanted to play Led Zeppelin. I had a hard time only because I knew that I could sit behind the drumkit and play, and what these guys were teaching me was something I didn't think I'd ever use. Later on, though, I realized they had helped me a lot because I saw that rudiments were essential. A lot of drummers who haven't had formal training, like me, use things that they don't realize are rudimentary things. I think it's important for young people to study and at least get the basics together."

Mostly, though, Mickey honed his skills by playing to records. "My early influences were guys like Ringo. I was seven years old when I saw the Beatles on TV and I freaked," he says. "I couldn't believe it. 'Look at the guy swing!' He created an entire style of drumming single-handedly. He's one of the greatest ever. I think a lot of drummers who are really technically proficient have this kind of snobby attitude about guys who aren't technically proficient. But if you talk to, say, Vinnie Colaiuta, he'll tell you that John Bonham was the guy. It's got nothing to do with how fast you can play or how great you can solo. Drum-

"When I finish a project with Bryan, I'm amazed at some of the things he's pulled out of me."



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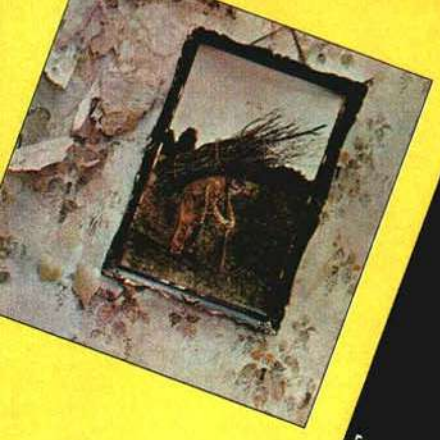
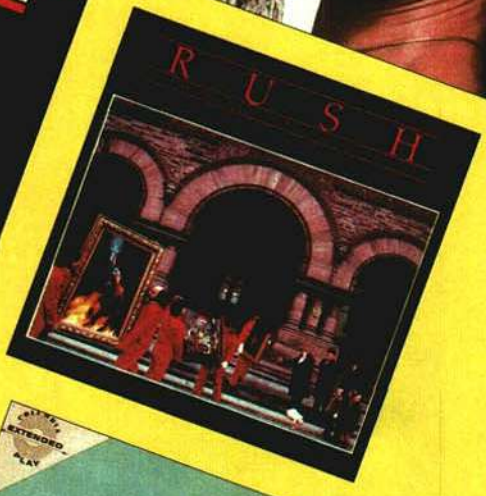
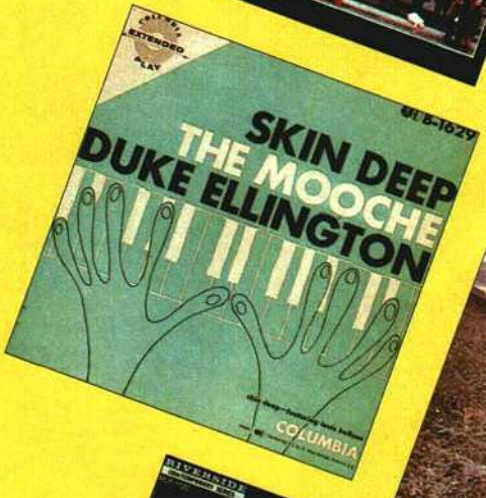
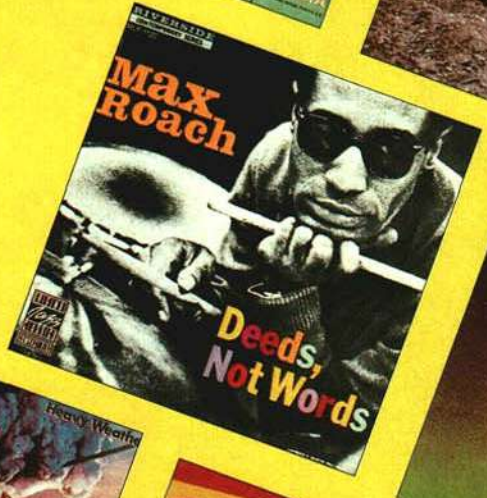
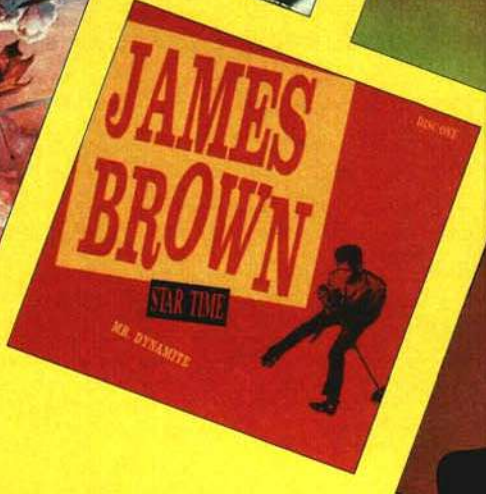


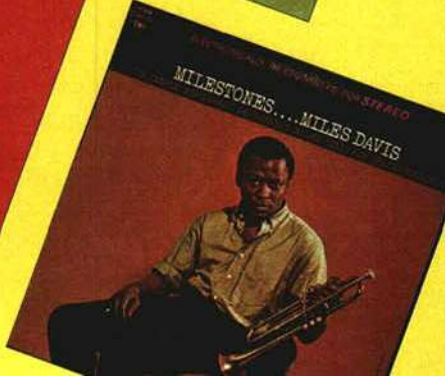


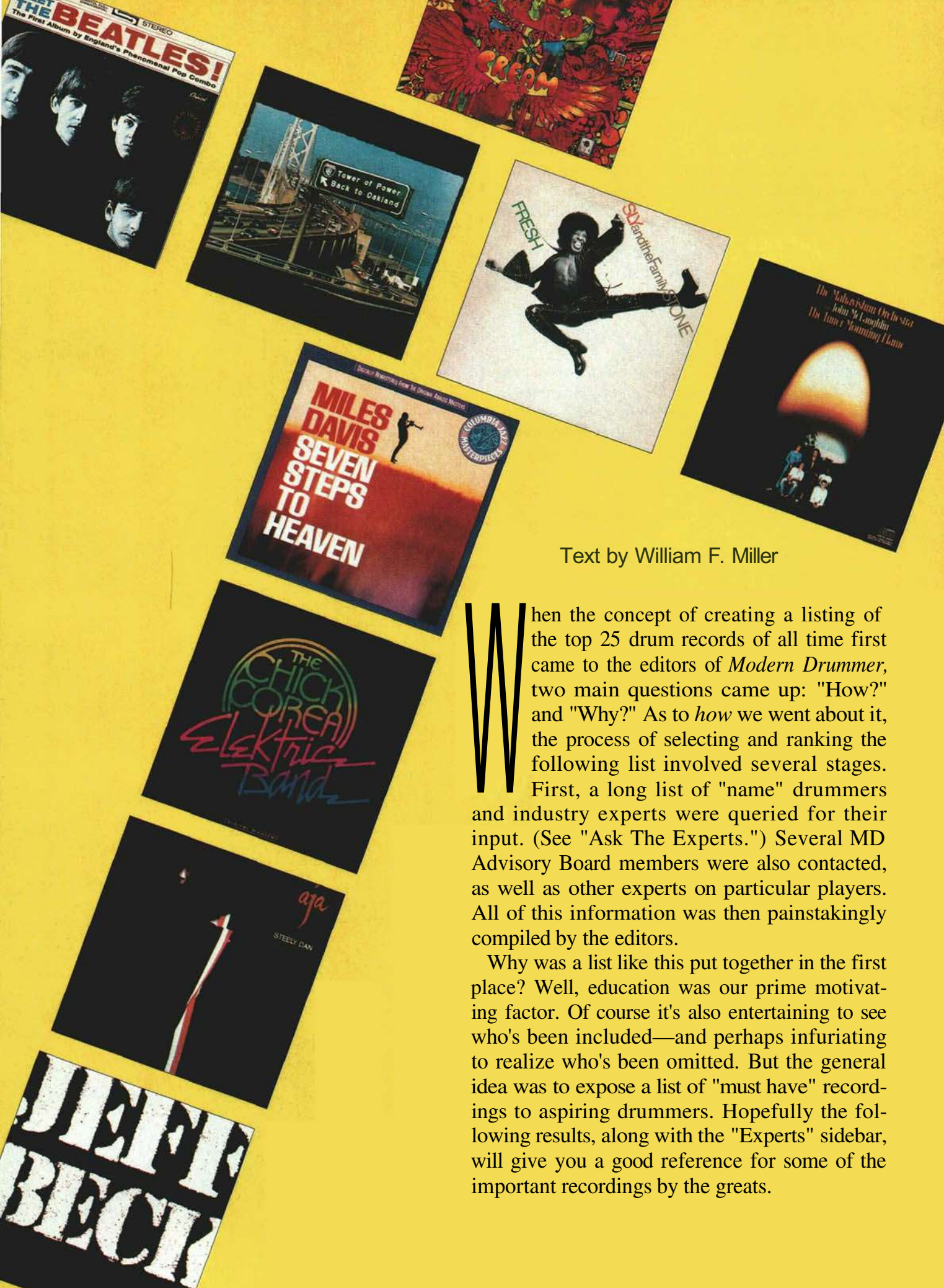
THE 25 GREATEST DRUM RECORDS











Text by William F. Miller

When the concept of creating a listing of the top 25 drum records of all time first came to the editors of *Modern Drummer,* two main questions came up: "How?" and "Why?" As to *how* we went about it, the process of selecting and ranking the following list involved several stages. First, a long list of "name" drummers and industry experts were queried for their input. (See "Ask The Experts.") Several MD Advisory Board members were also contacted, as well as other experts on particular players. All of this information was then painstakingly compiled by the editors.

Why was a list like this put together in the first place? Well, education was our prime motivating factor. Of course it's also entertaining to see who's been included—and perhaps infuriating to realize who's been omitted. But the general idea was to expose a list of "must have" recordings to aspiring drummers. Hopefully the following results, along with the "Experts" sidebar, will give you a good reference for some of the important recordings by the greats.

1
BUDDY RICH BIG BAND
Mercy, Mercy

Of course Buddy begins our list. This particular live recording was made in Las Vegas with one of his hottest and most pro-infused bands. It includes the seminal "Channel 1 Suite," which is considered one of Buddy's best works. (Two other Rich albums were also highly nominated: the drum battle records *Krupa* vs. *Rich* and *Rich vs. Roach*—both classics as well.)

2
BENNY GOODMAN ORCHESTRA
"Sing, Sing, Sing"

Without a doubt Gene Krupa was one of *the* most influential drummers of the twentieth century. He recorded many significant tracks throughout his career—both as a sideman and as a leader—but this particular tune, recorded in 1937, certainly helped bring drums, and Krupa himself, to the forefront. Gene's wild-abandon tom-tom play and overall performance virtually made drumming for generations to come.

3
MILES DAVIS
Seven Steps To Heaven

Tony Williams' work with Miles' second great quintet has become some of the most important in drumming history. Several records were mentioned as important, including *"Four" & More.* But with Seven Steps, Tony, at age 17, first showed the world his immense talent.

4
THE BEATLES
Meet The Beatles

While some disagree as to Ringo's technical merits, his musical personality made an incredible impact on drumming. He inspired an *entire* generation to pick up sticks. (While his playing on this early recording was not completely innovative, Ringo did make his mark in later years on important albums like *Revolver* and Abbey Rood.)

5
JOHN COLTRANE
A Love Supreme

This important work is considered to be the *definitive* statement of Elvin Jones' approach to the drumset. Elvin's unique way of playing time, as well as his overall intensity, completely changed drummers' perspectives on how to approach jazz drumming. According to Elvin, this recording was "a spiritual experience."

6
MAHAVISHNU ORCHESTRA
Inner Mounting Flame

On this, the first Mahavishnu record, Billy Cobham stunned the drumming community with his powerful

Ask The Experts

To help us come up with the Top 25 listing, we went to the experts—great drummers, drum historians, writers, and industry personalities—for their opinions on the great drum records. Their Top 10 selections shown here offer a wide variety of incredible listening.

Carl Allen
1. *Free For All,* Art Blakey And The Jazz Messengers
2. *Kind Of Blue,* Miles Davis *(Jimmy Cobb)*
3. *Nefertiti,* Miles Davis (Tony *Williams)*
4. *Ben And* Sweets, Ben Webster And Harry "Sweets" Edison *(Clarence Johnson)*
5. *Go,* Dexter Gordon *(Billy Higgins)*
6. *The Jo Jones Trio,* Jonathan Papa Jo Jones
7. *Kelly Great,* Wynton Kelly *(Philly Joe Jones)*
8. At *Storyville,* Charlie Parker (Roy *Haynes/Kenny Clarke)*
9. *Crescent,* John Coltrane *(Elvin Jones)*
10. *Ballads,* John Coltrane *(Elvin Jones)*

Carmine Appice
1. Gene Krupa & *Buddy Rich*
2. *Rich Vs. Roach,* Buddy Rich and Max Roach
3. The Gene *Krupa Story, Gene* Krupa
4. *Award Winning Drummer,* Max Roach
5. *The Drum Battle,* Gene Krupa and Buddy Rich
6. *Spectrum,* Billy Cobham
7. Fresh *Cream,* Cream *(Ginger Baker)*
8. Are *You Experienced,* Jimi Hendrix *(Mitch Mitchell)*
9. *Inner Mounting Flame,* Mahavishnu Orchestra *(Billy Cobham)*
10. *Stanley Clarke,* Stanley Clarke (Tony *Williams)*

Kenny Aronoff
1. *Big Swing Face,* Buddy Rich
2. A Love *Supreme,* John Coltrane (Elvin Jones)
3. Aja, Steely Dan (Steve *Gadd)*
4. *Heavy Weather,* Weather Report *(Alex Acuna)*
5. There And Back, Jeff Beck *(Simon Phillips)*
6. Spectrum, Billy Cobham
7. *Inner Mounting Flame,* Mahavishnu Orchestra *(Billy Cobham)*
8. *Leprechaun,* Chick Corea (Steve *Gadd)*
9. *Are You Experienced,* Jimi Hendrix *(Mitch Mitchell)*
10. *Brother To Brother,* Gino Vannelii (Mark Craney)

Hal Blaine
1. "Sing, Sing, Sing," Benny Goodman (Gene *Krupa)*
2. Various, Woody Herman (Dave *Tough/Don Lamond/Tiny Kahn)*
3. *Opus Number 1 Greatest Hits,* Tommy Dorsey *(Buddy Rich)*
4. *Undercurrent Blues,* Benny Goodman (Sonny *Igoe)*
5. *Artistry In Rhythm,* Stan Kenton *(Shelly Manne/Alvin Stoller)*
6. "Take Five," Dave Brubeck (Joe *Morello)*
7. "April In Paris," Count Basie (Sonny Payne)
8. "Big Noise From Winnetka," Bob Crosby (Ray *Bauduc)*
9. "Topsy," Cozy Cole
10. "Blue Flame (Theme Song)," Woody Herman (Dave *Tough)*

Michael Blair
1. Who's Next, the Who *(Keith Moon)*
2. *Heavy Weather,* Weather Report *(Alex Acuna)*
3. *Security, Peter* Gabriel (Jerry Marotta)
4. Deeds Not Words, Max Roach
5. *Fingers,* Airto Moreira
6. All Miles Davis's records
7. Spectrum, Billy Cobham
8. *Synchronicity,* the Police (Stewart *Copeland)*
9. *Party Of One,* Nick Lowe (Jim *Keltner)*
10. Anything With Al Jackson, Hal Blaine, Earl Palmer, or Steve Gadd.

Bill Bruford
1. A Love *Supreme,* John Coltrane (Elvin Jones)
2. Seven Steps To *Heaven,* Miles Davis (Tony *Williams)*
3. *Time Further Out, Dave* Brubeck (Joe *Morello)*
4. *Now He Sings, Now He Sobs,* Chick Corea (Roy *Haynes)*
5. *Inner Mounting Flame,* Mahavishnu Orchestra (Billy Cobham)
6. Fresh, Sly Stone (Andy *Newmark)*
7. *My Song,* Keith Jarrett (Jon *Christensen)*

Ask The Experts

8. *With Everything I Feel In* Me, Aretha Franklin *(Bernard Purdie)*
9. *Back To Oakland,* Tower Of Power (David *Garibaldi)*
10. "Bernie's Tune," Walkman Jazz Series (Gene *Krupa and Buddy Rich)*

Adam Budofsky *(MD Associate Editor)*
1. My *Generation, Quadrophenia,* the Who *(Keith Moon)*
2. *Waiting For Columbus,* Little Feat *(Richie Hayward)*
3. *Yesterday And Today,* the Beatles *(Ringo Starr)*
4. *Physical Graffiti, IV,* Led Zeppelin *(John Bonham)*
5. Peter *Gabriel (III),* Peter Gabriel (Jerry Marotta and *Phil Collins)*
6. *Angel's Egg,* Gong *(Pierre* Moerlen)
7. Green Mind, Dinosaur Jr. *(1.* Mascis *and Murph)*
8. Lust For *Life,* Iggy Pop (Hunt Sales)
9. *Parallel Lines,* Blondie *(Clem Burke)*
\0. *Babylon By Bus,* Bob Marley *(Carlton Barrett)*

Roy Burns
1. *Ellington Uptown,* Duke Ellington *(Louie Bellson)*
2. "Not So Quiet Please," Tommy Dorsey (Buddy Rich)
3. "Sing, Sing, Sing," Benny Goodman (Gene *Krupa)*
4. *Rich Craft,* Buddy Rich
5. "Wire Brush Stomp," Gene Krupa
6. "Disc Jockey Jump," Gene Krupa
7. This One's *For Basie,* Buddy Rich
8. The Sun Down *Sessions, Terry* Gibbs *(Mel Lewis)*
9. *Colossus,* Sonny Rollins (Max Roach)
}0. "If I Were A Bell," Red Garland Trio *(Philly Joe Jones)*

Denny Carmassi
1. Green Onions, Booker T. & The MG's *(Al Jackson, Jr.)*
2. Are *You Experienced,* Jimi Hendrix Experience (Mitch *Mitchell)*
3. *Believe It,* Tony Williams' Lifetime
4. *Wheels Of Fire, Cream (Ginger Baker)*
5. "Heartbreak Hotel," Elvis Presley (D.J. Fontana)
6. "Keep A Knock'n," Little Richard *(Charles Connor)*
7. *Star Time (Box Set),* James Brown *(Clyde Stubblefield, John Starks, Melvin Parker)*
8. *Led Zeppelin I & Physical Graffiti,* Led Zeppelin *(John Bonham)*
9. "West Side Story," Buddy Rich Band
10. "In The Air Tonight," Phil Collins

Deen Castronovo
1. *Night After Night,* UK (Terry Bozzio)
2. *Hemispheres,* Rush *(Neil Peart)*
3. Speed *Metal Symphony,* Cacophony (Atma Anur)
4. *Global Beat,* Vital Information (Steve Smith)
5. *...And Justice For All,* Metallica (Lars *Ulrich)*
6. *Unleashed In The East,* Judas Priest (Les Binks)
7. Zenyatta Mondatta, the Police (Steward *Copeland)*
8. Edge *Of Insanity,* Tony MacAlpine (Steve Smith)
9. *Captured,* Journey (Steve *Smith)*
10. *All The World's A* Stage, Rush *(Neil Peart)*

Dennis Chambers
1. *Believe It, Tony* Williams
2. Spectrum, Billy Cobham
3. *Elvin!,* Elvin Jones
4. Drums *Unlimited,* Max Roach
5. Keystone 3, Art Blakey
6. Joe's *Garage,* Frank Zappa *(Vinnie Colaiuta)*
7. *Heavy Metal Bebop,* Brecker Brothers (Terry Bozzio)
8. Astral *Pirates,* Lenny White
9. One Of A Kind, Bill Bruford
10. *Electric Outlet,* John Scofield (Steve Jordan)

Jim Chapin
1. "Sing, Sing, Sing," Benny Goodman (Gene *Krupa)*
2. Buddy And Sweets, Buddy Rich
3. Skin Deep, Duke Ellington (Louie *Bellson)*
4. *A Fifth For Frank,* Curtis Counce *(Frank Butler)*
5. Daahoud, Max Roach & Clifford Brown
6. *Castillian Drums, Dave* Brubeck (Joe *Morello)*
7. *Lulu's Back In Town,* Thelonius Monk (Ben *Riley)*
8. Quiet *Please,* Tommy Dorsey *(Buddy Rich)*
9. *Quintet Album,* Raymond Scott *(Johnny Williams)*
10. Inner *Mounting Flame,* Mahavishnu Orchestra *(Billy Cobham)*

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and unique approach. At this point he was using a relatively small kit (with only one kick), but his devastating technique inspired drummers in all genres. The raw passion this recording contains helped chart the course for fusion.

7
LED ZEPPELIN
IV

John Bonham is without a doubt the most influential of the "heavy rock" drummers. Almost every recording he made with Zeppelin contained great drumming, on songs that have become classics. *IV* was one of the band's most significant albums, with tracks like "Black Dog," "Rock And Roll," "Stairway To Heaven," and "Misty Mountain Hop" demonstrating Bonham's powerful swagger.

8
MAX ROACH
Deeds, Not Words

One of the most influential drummers to emerge from the bop era, Max Roach's contribution to drumming has been heavily felt. A host of his recorded performances were nominated to the top 25, including *Drums Unlimited, Daahoud* (with Clifford Brown), and his masterwork *Freedom Now Suite.* But *Deeds, Not Words,* recorded in 1958, received the most votes as a classic drum release.

9
STEELY DAN
Aja

Much more than a pop record, *Aja* would probably make it on the list for Steve Gadd's fabulous reading of the title track. (Gadd was nominated for this list several times for his work on two Chick Corea albums: *Friends* and Lenrechaun.) Many other great drummers performed on this album, including Jim Keltner, Bernard Purdie, Rick Marotta, Ed Greene, and Paul Humphrey.

10
RUSH
Moving Pictures

Neil Peart is considered the most influential rock drummer of the past two decades, and with Rush he's recorded many albums that highlight his strengths at the kit. However, *Moving Pictures* is probably his greatest recorded achievement. The power, creativety, and intelligent approach to rock drumming that Neil projected appears on every cut, and most especially on "Tom Sawyer."

11
MILES DAVIS
Milestones

This classic album from the '50s featured the great Philly Joe Jones. *Milestones* shows Philly's mastery of the drums, both at timekeeping and soloing. His time-feel was bouyant, and his solos were the perfect combination

continued on page 100

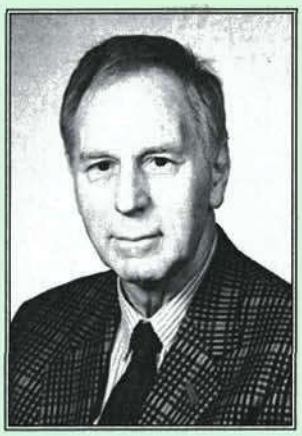
inside Sonor

By Rick Van Horn

In 1875, a Bavarian-born wood-turner and tanner named Johannes Link started a business making natural hide drumheads and military drums. He located his factory in Wessenfels/Saale, a district in eastern Germany. His business grew over the years, and by 1900 it employed 53 craftsmen making timpani, concert drums, mallet instruments, cymbals, and other percussion items. Complete drumsets were added to the line in the early 1920s, by which time the factory had grown to 145 employees and the Sonor brand name had been well established.

Johannes' son Otto guided the company through the Great Depression, World War II, and post-war European turmoil, until the Sonor factory was expropriated by the East German government in 1950. At that time, Otto and his son, Horst, moved the operation to the Westphalia district of West Germany, establishing a new factory and virtually starting over. By 1955, the company offered enough drums and percussion instruments to fill a 100-page catalog. In that same year, Otto Link died, and Horst took over the company. From that point until today, the company has continued to expand and develop. Currently, production is split 50/50 between Sonor drumkits and marching percussion, and Orff musical education and music-therapy instruments.

Horst Link retained ownership of the company until January of 1991, when he sold it to the Hohner corporation. Mr. Link stayed on as president of Sonor until January of 1992, when he retired. Just prior to that retirement, *MD* spoke with him about the history and current state of the company that his family had founded and controlled for over 120 years.



Horst Link, president of Sonor from 1955 until 1992, and grandson of the company's founder

Our first question had to do with the origin of the "Sonor" brand name. According to Mr. Link, "The name was granted as a trademark by the Imperial Patent Office in Munich in 1907. The word 'sonor' comes from Latin, and means 'sound.' It was a very good brand name then; today the Patent Office wouldn't accept it because it is a descriptive term used in the general music industry. Expressions that must be used by others to describe their products cannot be protected with a patent today."

Sonor's prestigious reputation throughout the world is solidly established. (Remember the "Rolls-Royce Of Drums" ads?) As Horst Link guided the company over the years, was there a particular philosophy or goal that he tried to follow in order to achieve, maintain, and enhance that reputation?

"Over the many years I've worked here," he replies, "the primary goal was not—believe it or not—to maximize the profit. That was *one* of the goals, of course—otherwise a company cannot exist. But our number-one goal was to produce high-quality instruments. I didn't want to compete in price against the Japanese and Taiwanese. Our best chance for success was, and still is, to have better drums. With German craftsmanship and tradition, and experienced and motivated workers, we have always had that capability. Of course, this was only possible through a very close connection to top drummers and music educators. It was something that I was very pleased to do. Although we haven't become the biggest drum manufacturer, I firmly believe that we manufacture the best instruments in the world.

"Of course, we always watch very carefully what's going on in the market. It's a

challenge for us not just to be able to keep our position, but also to extend it. What we are doing to compete with our Japanese competitors is to enter the Japanese market. They are buying only our leading—and most expensive—lines. It doesn't make sense to come into Japan with cheaper products. We are fighting our other competitors, not only on the top, but also on the lower levels, with the *Force 2000,* and we have added the *Force 3000* for the middle. But the biggest market is on the bottom. We feel that it's possible for us to go after a bigger share of this interesting market, developing lines that can compete not only in quality but also in price. *[Editor's note: In January of 1992, Sonor introduced its low-end* Force 1000 *series.]*

Product Manager Karl-Heinz Menzl displays the vertical-grain veneer used on Sonor drums.

This elaborate machine is used to form seamless metal snare drum shells and drum rims.

"With the cooperation of Hohner around the world for distribution, we can approach the lower-level market. But not the *lowest* level. It remains important to us to have our instruments manufactured here, not in Taiwan or somewhere else. We had one very bad experience with an import kit a few years ago, called the *International* series. It was a flop. You do make mistakes from time to time, and we realized that we should never do it again.

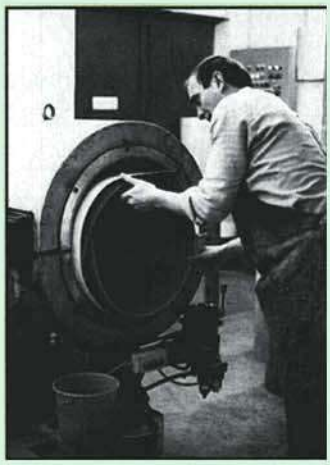
"Today," Mr. Link continues, "our 'quality first' and 'drummers first' philosophy is considered very 'modern'—but I established it twenty or thirty years ago. We came out in the 1950s with our own newspaper, called the *Sonor Drummer.* At that time, it was quite sensational to do such things. Another important part of our philosophy is to be better at protecting the environment than others who don't care as much. We also strive to enhance the motivation of the 200-plus people who work with us. This doesn't happen everywhere."

Not many drum factories are situated in rural farm country. Why did the Links move the operation to the village of Aue, rather than to a city that might have been more convenient for shipping or other industrial considerations?

Horst Link explains, "At the time I started, I began making genuine skin drumheads, like my grandfather. They couldn't have been manufactured in an industrial area, because we needed clear, fresh water and good air. So the drumhead operation brought us here. It was an area where there were no people who knew about manufacturing musical instruments; at that time they were working in the woods or as farmers. It took a long time to educate them, but once we managed it, we had a very skilled and dedicated work force. We have people who've worked here for forty years! That's why they really know what they're doing. We don't have to worry about re-training someone every couple of weeks. Of course, it costs more money to ship merchandise from here than from Hamburg. But you can't have everything; you have to have priorities. The employees and some other factors balance out the shipping inconvenience, and I see that as more important."

The announcement that Sonor had been sold to the Hohner corporation last year raised some questions within the drumming community regarding the status of the company. Horst Link explains the situation.

"On January 1, 1991, Sonor became part of Hohner. They're a well-known corporation in Europe and around the world. Sonor will operate independently, with its own distribution, its own customers, and its own endorsers. There will be many things in common with Hohner, of course, such as displays at trade shows. But percussion instruments are percussion instruments, and harmonicas are harmonicas, and you cannot put them all together."



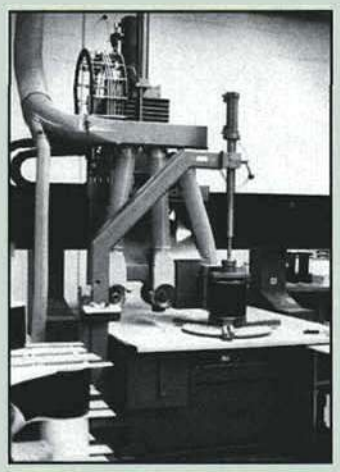
Plywood panels cut to minute tolerances are fitted into pressure molds to create Sonor's drumshells.

Every snare drum that leaves the factory is pre-tuned.

Design And Development

The Sonor manufacturing complex fills several large buildings housing separate drum and percussion-instrument production departments. The entire operation would do justice to a Detroit auto plant. But that's not to say that industrial efficiency takes precedence over craftsmanship and the desire for quality. Quite the contrary: Sonor's elaborate and painstaking way of doing things is the result of a constant effort to achieve those very attributes. It's just that they make that effort on a pretty grand scale.

Sonor also does things on a minute scale. For example, the Sonor catalog features pages describing the results of extensive research into the acoustics and physics of drum design. In typical Germanic style, nothing is left to chance; every element of drum design and construction is carefully considered before actual production begins. Over the years, that consideration has led to the development of a wide variety of drum lines, incorporating different woods and shell thicknesses. According to Karl-Heinz Menzel, Sonor's Product Manager, "An important part of our philosophy is to satisfy the various requirements of drummers for all types of music with reference to different sounds."



Sonor's attention to detail is demonstrated by the fact that every hardware part is individually hand-polished *(below).* But modern efficiency is also employed, as illustrated by the totally automatic, computer-controlled drilling machine *(left).*

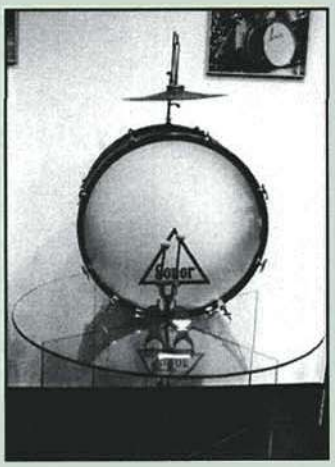
For many years, Sonor was noted for their extra-thick, extra-strong shells. In fact, a famous ad from the early 1980s shows a beefy workman crouched atop a tom-tom shell to illustrate its strength. The company's thickest shells, from their *Signature Series,* were introduced in 1980 and made of 12-ply, 11mm-thick beech. This thick shell was the result of research conducted by Sonor that indicated that a drumshell is "acoustically passive, and does not contribute notably to the sound projection of a drum." Further, "The shell must have great mass... [because] it favors an efficient projection of the fundamental tone." With the *Signature* series, Sonor became noted for heavy, low-sounding drums.

On the other hand, Sonor also realized that some drummers simply preferred brighter sounds than those produced by the *Signature* series. Their research indicated that "The basic frequency will be more muffled when the shell has a thin wall, so that the upper frequencies emerge. The sound seems to have more overtones, to be more brilliant and sustaining." To take advantage of these characteristics, in the mid-'80s the company introduced *Sonorlite*—a line that features 9-ply (7.5mm) tom-tom and 12-ply (8.5mm) bass and snare shells of Scandinavian birch.

Responding again to market demand, Sonor introduced its first all-maple line of drums in 1988. These were the *Hilite* and *Hilite Exclusive* lines. Sonor added a special feature to this series—rubber insulators isolating all metal parts from the shell—in order to enhance vibration and supply "maximum sustain." The 9-ply (7.5mm) shells were designed to produce "a warm and full tone with precise attack." In 1991, the attributes of the *Hilite* line were applied to the *Signature* style of drum construction, resulting in the *Signature Special Edition* series, which features 12-ply maple shells with high-gloss lacquered African bubinga veneers, and *Hilite-style* acoustically isolated hardware (known as the Advanced Projection System).

Along with the development of top-quality lines, Sonor also addressed the entry-level and semi-pro market in 1990 and 1991 with the *Force 2000* (9-ply poplar) and *Force 3000* (9- and 11-ply birch) series. Both are designed to offer strong, lively sounds and powerful attack.

Who at Sonor is responsible for drum design and development? Karl-Heinz Menzel replies, "We work as a team. My job includes design, and I work with two engineers. We get ideas by sitting down and talking things over, and we also work with our endorsers to get ideas from them. That's an important contribution that they make to our program.

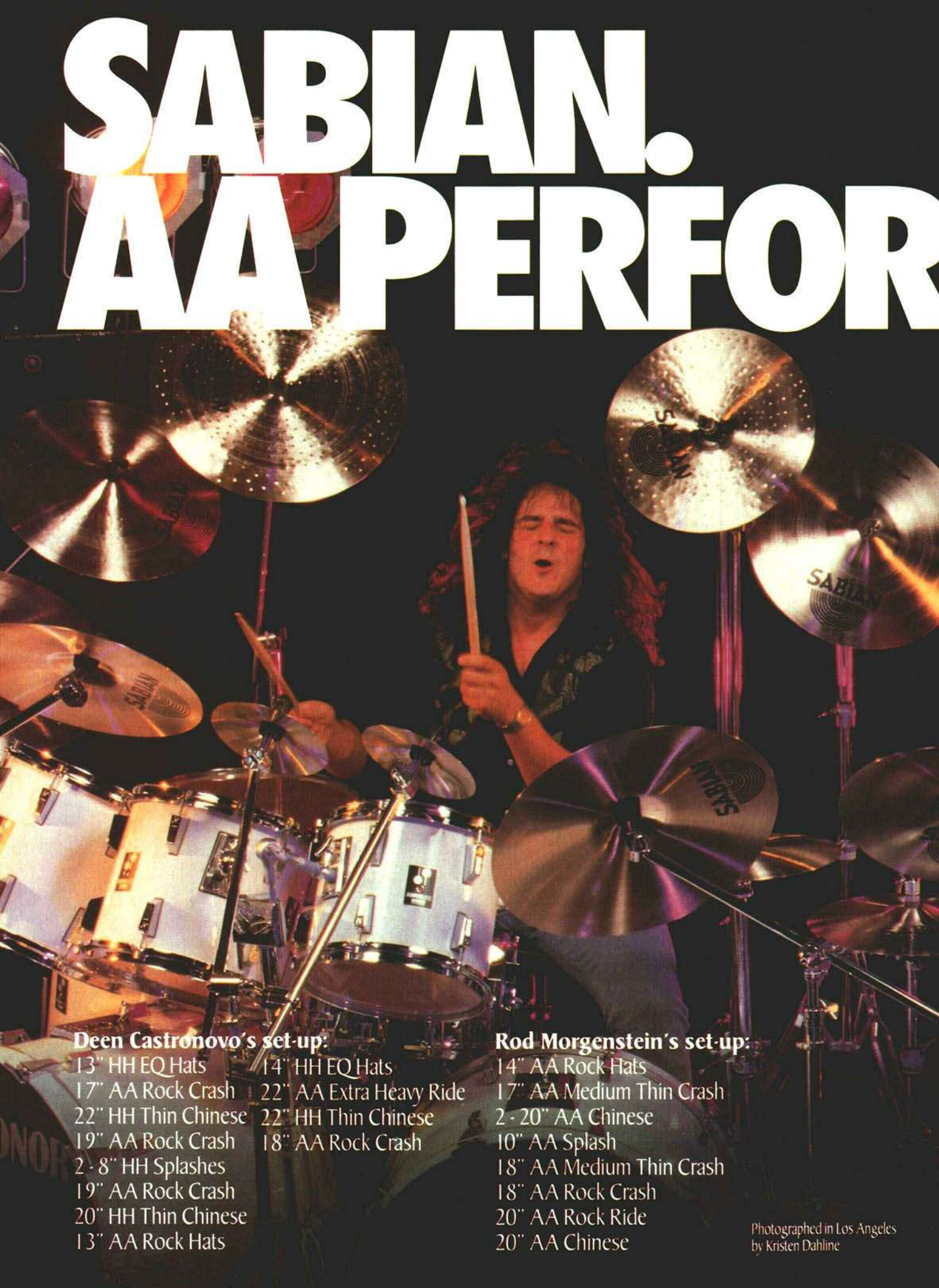


"Everything old is new again." Sonor offered this double bass drum pedal shortly after the turn of the century.

"Dealers also offer us ideas, and almost every week we get people coming to us with something that they have invented and want us to buy. We have to be very careful about that, though. In fact, I generally tell people, 'Don't come here with

continued on page 118

SABIAN. AA PERFOR



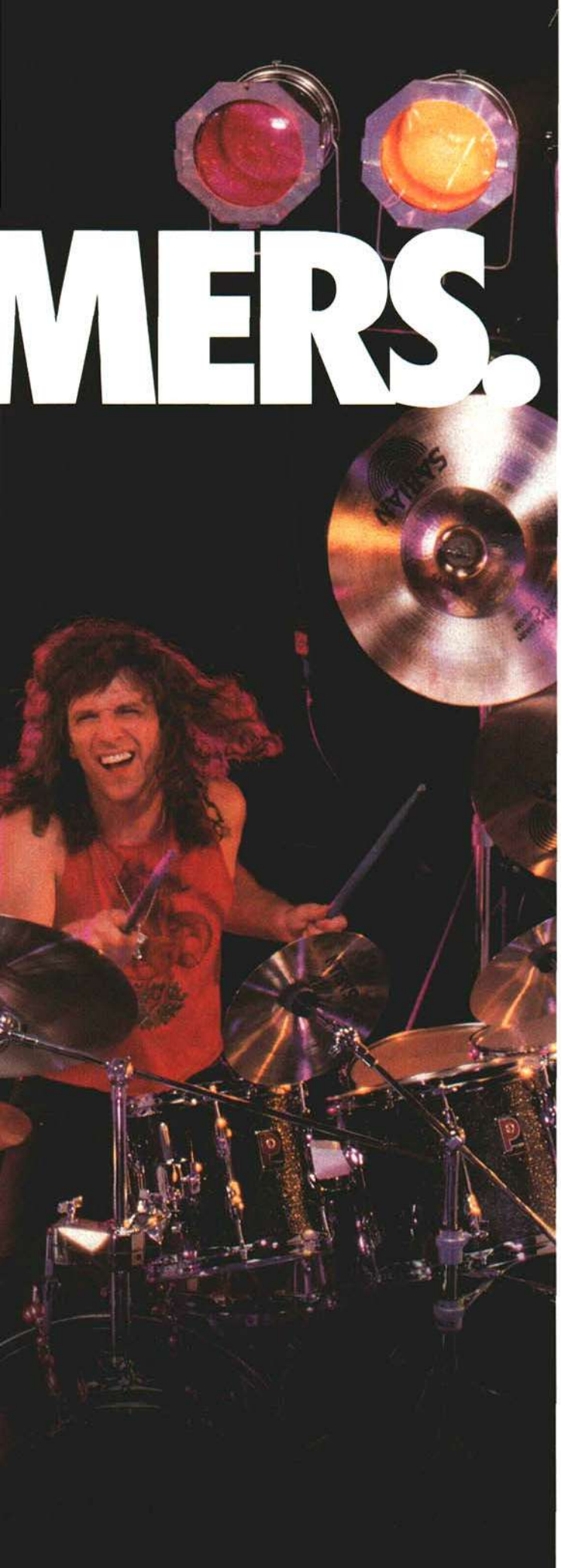
Deen Castronovo's set-up:

13" HH EQ Hats
17" AA Rock Crash
22" HH Thin Chinese
19" AA Rock Crash
2 - 8" HH Splashes
19" AA Rock Crash
20" HH Thin Chinese
13" AA Rock Hats
14" HH EQ Hats
22" AA Extra Heavy Ride
22" HH Thin Chinese
18" AA Rock Crash

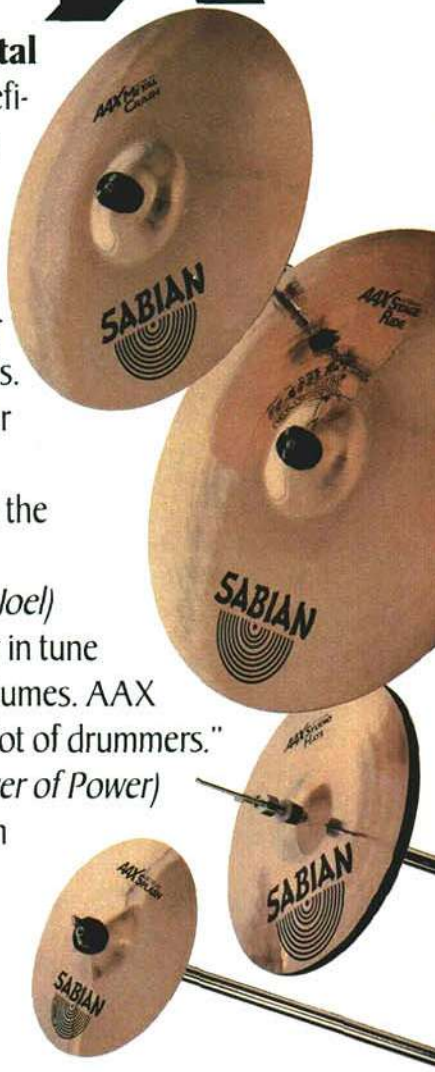
Rod Morgenstein's set-up:

14" AA Rock Hats
17" AA Medium Thin Crash
2 - 20" AA Chinese
10" AA Splash
18" AA Medium Thin Crash
18" AA Rock Crash
20" AA Rock Ride
20" AA Chinese

Photographed in Los Angeles
by Kristen Dahline



New!! AAX



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"AAX sounds are totally in tune with themselves at all volumes. AAX will definitely surprise a lot of drummers."
Russ McKinnon *(Tower of Power)*

"AAX Metal is maximum power, cut and music at every volume. There's nothing else like it."
Blas Elias *(Slaughter)*

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Firchie Snare Drum

by Rick Van Horn

Yeah, it looks a little weird. But this unusual drum also offers some genuine innovations and unique performance qualities.

The Firchie snare drum is the brainchild of drummer/designer Ivan Firchie. It combines a free-floating, seamless aluminum shell (which I'll touch on later) and a rotational tensioning system similar to that of a RotoTom. The concept is that once the heads are lug-tuned evenly to a medium tension, the entire drum can then be rotated on its stand to proportionally increase or decrease the tension of both the top and bottom heads—thus raising or lowering the pitch of the drum. The sound of the drum can literally be changed from that of a piccolo to that of a 10"-deep drum (or anywhere in between) in seconds. According to the manufacturers, this eliminates the need for several snare drums in a studio situation, and makes the drum extremely versatile for use on a live gig.

To add to the versatility of the drum, it is equipped with a strainer and throw-off at each end of the snares. (These strainers are attached to the lower "rim," not to the drumshell.) By adjusting the tension of each strainer differently, one can achieve three separate snare sounds by virtue of using either one—or both—of the strainers. (Of course, both can be released for a tom sound.) The drum had a definite sweet spot in terms of snare response; it wanted to be hit right in the center. Off-center impact resulted in significantly less snare sound and a lot more head/shell ring.

For the time being, Firchie drums only come with a 4 1/2"-deep shell. (A piccolo model is being experimented with.) The thin, one-piece aluminum shell features specially rounded bearing edges for the drumheads, and a unique contour. While the shell sits squarely within the hoop of the bottom head, it tapers so as to be over 1" smaller in diameter than the top head. That means that the top head extends beyond the edge of the shell over 1/2" all the way around—in much the same way that timpani or gong bass drum heads extend beyond their shells. Along with the "free-floating" nature of the shell, this top-head extension contributes to the resonance of the drum—which I found to be considerable. In fact, between the metallic sound of the shell and the timpanic head arrangement, the Firchie had almost *too much* resonance. In an attempt to address this problem, Firchie ships the drum with a Remo *Legacy* head (which has characteristics somewhere between *an Ambassador* and a *Fiberskyn 2.)* But I don't think the head alone does the job. Unless you are a *big* fan of the classic Alex Van Halen snare drum sound, you'll probably want to muffle this drum down a bit. But to be fair, the resonance gave the drum tremendous projection and *killer* rimshots—no matter what the head tension.

There are a wide range of finishes available on Firchie drums, from brass and chrome to a variety of colors. The drums I examined looked wonderful. A thicker aluminum shell will soon be available as an option, and wooden shells are under development.

One potential problem with this drum is its size: The works of the rotational tuning system sit beneath the drum itself—making the entire assembly about 9" deep. This requires a snare stand that can accommodate deep-shelled drums. (Since different snare stands have baskets that clamp on at different angles, Ivan Firchie has thoughtfully provided points on the frame for snare-basket clamping at two different levels.) The extra depth will also require an appropriate bag or case. That bag or case should be heavy-duty, by the way, because the drum weighs a little over 15 pounds.

A second problem is acoustic in nature: The drum features single-tension tuning. That is, both the individual tuning lugs and the rotational tensioning system tighten both the top and bottom heads at the same time. I found myself wondering what would happen if I could lower the pitch of the batter head with-

out sacrificing the crispness of snare response I'd get if the bottom head remained tight. But this might be nit-picking, considering the variables of head tension and snare adjustment that were available to work with.

I took the drum out on several gigs, and enjoyed tweaking it from song to song to achieve the optimum snare sound for each. On funky tunes with lots of busy syncopations I kicked it up into piccolo range; on power ballads and disco dance tunes I dropped it down for a big-as-a-barn backbeat. For additional variety, I fiddled a bit with the snares at each different head tension. It was like having a rack full of sampled snare drum sounds—without the hassle of triggers, interfaces, sound sources, and amps! I also had the added benefit of being able to change any aspect of the drum sound I wanted *as I was playing it.* Try doing that with a programmed sample!

When I first saw the Firchie drum, I was inclined to dismiss it as a gimmick, but after working with it I've been completely converted. It's an extremely useful tool for any drummer who appreciates versatility and quality performance from a single instrument. Prices vary with the finish: An all-chrome (shell and hardware) drum lists for $800; a custom-color shell with all-black hardware goes for $910. Other finish combinations fall in between. While these prices sound a little steep, remember that one Firchie drum can create dozens of snare drum sounds. Firchie is a new company, so if your dealer has no information, contact the makers at 2 World Trade Center, Suite 2210, New York, NY 10048, (212) 321-3210.

Drumslinger Double Pedal And Extended Rack Bags

■ by Rick Van Horn

Designer-at-large Bob Gatzen and Tough Traveler, Ltd. have once again collaborated on some specialty bags offered under the Drumslinger brand. This time, they've come up with bags to handle double bass drum pedals and drum rack components.

Double Pedal Gig Bag

This compact (20" x 10" x 7") cordura bag is designed so that the two halves of a double pedal can nest one atop the other, with their pedals reversed. A padded "tongue" slips between the two halves to prevent scratching, inner pockets are provided for the axle, a drumkey, allen wrenches, and other small paraphernalia, and a special strap secures the beater rods on the primary pedal. The bag is fitted with top handles, an end handle, and a clip-on shoulder strap, and it has a nifty double zipper connected by a pull strap for easy access to the bag's contents. It isn't particularly padded, but you don't really need to be too worried about damage to metal bass drum pedals due to impact. The compactness of the bag and its ergonomic design are its best features. It sells for $112.

Extended Hardware/Rack Bag

This 50" x 14" cordura bag is designed to contain extended hardware (like straight stands and booms at full height) or drum rack components. It features double cinch straps (to securely bundle the contents into a more solid mass) and a handle specially designed to make carrying heavy items more comfortable. A padded shoulder strap is also provided.

The 50" length of the bag should be enough to carry most standard lengths of drum-rack tubing, but (in typical Gatzen fashion) the possibility of using longer components has been accounted for. A special 12" extension sleeve pops out of one side of the bag, increasing the overall length to 62". This sleeve tucks back into the bag and is secured by a *Velcro* strap so it isn't flapping around loose if it isn't needed. Even when longer items are fitted into the bag, the cinch straps bundle everything together neatly and make the bag easy to carry. The suggested list price is $112. If your dealer doesn't stock Drumslinger bags, contact Tough Traveler, Ltd., 1012 State St., Schenectady, NY 12307, (518) 377-8526.

Axis II Double Pedal

by Chap Ostrander

In the February 1991 issue *of MD,* Rick Van Horn reviewed the *Axis* bass drum pedal from Engineered Percussion. Since I'm here to review the new Axis II double pedal, I'll save time by synopsizing Rick's key descriptive comments regarding the single version that also apply to the double: "Each pedal is made up of parts machined from aircraft-quality steel and aluminum alloys; there are no cast parts...components are attached to each other with allen-head machine screws... all moving parts employ ball bearings... non-moving parts are only as large as they need to be for strength and function without unnecessary mass...each pedal is a work of art."

The truly unique feature of the *Axis* design is the linkage between the footboard and the beater. A "variable drive lever" allows the player to adjust the amount of leverage by sliding the coupling at the beater forward or back along a metal shaft, ahead of the pedal's axle. Furthermore, performance aspects such as beater stroke, footboard angle, spring tensioning, and the like are independently adjustable.

Engineered Percussion's double version of *the Axis* offers all of the above features—and more. The company wanted the pedal to be of a modular design so that it could be based on the existing single *Axis* pedal—and in fact could be an add-on for those who already own one. They also needed to keep the mechanism for the secondary beater off to the side of the primary pedal so that it would stay clear of the "detonator" pickup that attaches to the main upright for the electronic trigger version of the pedal: the *Axis E.* These considerations led to an L-shaped mount for the left-side beater. I was concerned that some torque might be lost due to this design, but this was not the case—due to the light weight of the alloys used plus the action of the ball bearings at each connection point on the pedal.

The left (or slave) pedal has its own spring assembly, rather than relying on one mounted on the primary pedal. This gave the left pedal a very realistic feel; I could move my primary foot over to the slave pedal and get virtually the same playing feel and response as from the primary pedal. Additionally, having its own spring allows the slave pedal to be used as a single pedal when detached from the main unit: Just move the beater over, and away you go. The design of the slave unit allows it to have its own electronic pickup, as well.

The base of *the Axis II's* primary pedal features a clamp that attaches it securely to the bass drum hoop and reduces the torque caused by the action of the two beaters. Both pedals have industrial-strength *Velcro-like* material attached to their bottoms that seems to *bond* with a carpeted surface; they will *not* move once set up.

When Engineered Percussion's designer/president, Darrell Johnston, went shopping for universal joints to use on the rod that connects the two halves of the *Axis II,* he couldn't find any that didn't have some kind of play or "give" in their action. This was not acceptable to him, because any loss of motion between the left pedal and its beater also represented a loss of playing response. So he decided to design and build his own. The new joints—referred to as "zero-backlash universals"—were designed with ball bearings that ride in a hardened cup inside the universal joint itself. They meet Darrell's standards perfectly: There is absolutely no play, give, or any other form of movement in them. When you step on the slave pedal, the feeling is *identical* to stepping on the primary.

All of the drumkey-operated bolts that hold the various adjustments (such as beater height, length and angle of the drive shaft, etc.) have removable *Loc-tite* on them. This means that they keep their adjustments once tightened into place, and won't fall out when the assembly is in transit. The bolts that secure the connecting rod between the two pedal bases are not subject to the vibrations that occur during playing if they are set and tightened properly.

The universals mounted at each end of the connecting rod feature cups that receive the hex-shaped rods from the two pedal bases. These cups are rounded inside, however, rather than being hex-

shaped themselves. The theory behind this is that the bottom edges of the rods will dig in and seat themselves into each cup opposite the tightening bolt. When tightened properly, this is a very secure connection and provides direct transfer of power from the footboard to the beater.

Performance

From a playing standpoint, the *Axis II* is unbelievable! I found myself playing patterns and figures—in both heels-up and heels-down positions—that I never could have done before. The action is so smooth and clean that you could forget that you don't have two bass drums. The double pedal would also be a boon to drumset teachers. For example, while standing next to one of my private students, I was able to play patterns using my right foot on the left-side pedal. I found that I could demonstrate doubles on one foot just as easily from that side as if I were seated at the kit and playing the primary pedal.

The *Axis II* is a glimpse into the future of drum technology and a tribute to the ingenuity of its designers. It has the capability of being fine-tuned to any drummer's individual playing style, and, thanks to the thoughtfulness that went into its design, can and will retain those adjustments. And the quality of its construction is such that you can expect it to give excellent service for many years.

A complete *Axis II* with both primary and slave pedals lists for $565; a slave-only upgrade for an existing *Axis* single pedal costs *$325. Axis E* trigger upgrades are available at $125 apiece. For more information, contact Engineered Percussion at 24416 South Main St., #310, Carson, CA 90745, (310) 549-1171.

Pro-Mark Power Grip And Super-Bounce Sticks

by Rick Van Horn

Power Grip Sticks

Pro-Mark's *new Power Grip* series offers four of their most popular stick models (5A, *5B, 747 Rock,* and *2B)* treated with a special textured coating in the grip area for improved slip-resistance. This powder-gray colored coating gradually fades into either a polished red or black colored finish on the rest of the stick. Oak sticks are red with black nylon tips; hickory sticks feature wood tips and are finished in black.

The four stick models involved here have been the most popular sellers in Pro-Mark's catalog for years, so I won't comment on them. I will say that the look of the sticks is quite stunning, and they'd be very attractive in terms of visual appeal. But is the textured coating a real improvement in terms of grip? And are the colored shafts and tips durable against chipping or marking drumheads and cymbals?

The answer to both those questions is a qualified yes. The grip feels like extremely fine-grain sandpaper—rough enough to offer a secure hold, even with sweaty hands. Depending on your sensitivity, you may or may not find the texture of the coating uncomfortable against your skin. I didn't; *MD* Associate Editor Adam Budofsky did. Check the sticks out in the store thoroughly with this possibility in mind before you buy them.

The colored finish on the shanks of the sticks proved quite durable—even when I deliberately tried to chip them against the edge of a hi-hat. In terms of marking heads or cymbals, this varied with the type of head and the way the sticks were played. The finish came off the tips of the hickory sticks slightly when I deliberately scuffed them sideways against a moderately-used coated white head or the bell of a ride cymbal; when I bounced them squarely against the same head and cymbal, no marks were created. Adam experienced more marking on a brand-new, more abrasive white coated head. The sticks left no marks at all on smooth, uncoated heads.

One noteworthy point about the *Power Grip* sticks is that while the grip areas have been textured, the colored

finishes on the rest of the sticks are *extremely* smooth and slippery. As a result, the sticks don't lend themselves to playing with the butt end. Perhaps Pro-Mark might consider making a *Power Grip* model with the textured coating on the entire stick. It wouldn't be as attractive, but it might offer greater versatility.

The current models are available at $11.25 for the wood-tipped hickory sticks and $11.50 for the nylon-tipped oak models.

Super Bounce Sticks

The *SD-20 Super Bounce* is a recent addition to Pro-Mark's maple stick line. It's a large stick, similar in size to a *2B* (16" long and 5/8" in diameter). But the fact that it's made of maple makes it much lighter than you'd expect. Additionally, the stick features a gradual taper down to a small neck and nylon tip—similar to a *7A* jazz stick The result of this design is a stick that is fat and comfortable in the hand, yet quick and easy to move around the drums. The small neck and nylon tip provide excellent snare and cymbal response, while the large diameter of the shank gives solid, meaty backbeats when the stick is played with the butt end. This is a big stick that feels and plays like a small stick, and while it might not be as durable as a hickory stick for extremely hard playing, I've found it absolutely wonderful for all-around use on my club and casual gigs. The *SD-20 Super Bounce* stick lists for $8.75 per pair.

Rock N' Roller

■ by Rick Van Horn

With this handy helper, getting there still may not be half the fun—but at least it's only half the work!

The *Rock N' Roller* is a combination moving dolly and hand truck that is vastly superior to any moving aid I've ever seen (short of a road crew). Designed by a working musician named Gary-Michael Dahl, it incorporates features that really simplify moving large amounts of musical equipment.

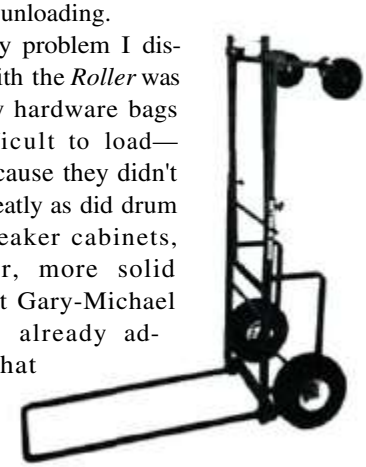
When used as a four-wheel dolly, the *Rock N' Roller* expands to a length of 54", with 33"-high sides for stacking large loads. (Six-foot bunji cords are available to stretch around loads for added security.) Yet it collapses to a compact 36" by 18" by 10" for packing up. Using the *Roller* in the dolly configuration, I was able to get a five-piece drumkit, several trap cases, two hardware bags, a cymbal case, and two monitor cabinets—everything I take to a club gig—into the club in *one trip.*

Sometimes you have to negotiate stairs or tight corners with your gear. A long four-wheel dolly won't make it. For these occasions, the *Roller* converts to a hand truck, simply by extending its length only two-thirds of the way, dropping one side down, and using the other side as a long nose extension.

This last feature is especially nice. Have you ever tried to pick up a stack of drum cases with a hand truck that extended its carrying shelf only 8" under the bottom of the bass drum? Instead of tilting back for rolling, the stack probably tilted *away* from you instead. The *Roller* eliminates this problem, because the nose extension under the stack of drums is actually one of the 33"-long sides.

The *Roller* is fitted with two pairs of wheels. One features 10" pneumatic tires, which go over bumps and stairs more easily than smaller casters do. These wheels are employed when the *Roller* is used as a hand truck. (The lower steel frame of the *Roller* also features "stair climbers" to facilitate sliding loads up stairs easily when the *Roller* is used in this manner.) Smaller, steerable casters are employed as the second pair of wheels when the *Roller* is used in the dolly mode. One features a locking device so that the *Roller* won't move while you're loading or unloading.

The only problem I discovered with the *Roller* was that bulky hardware bags were difficult to load—simply because they didn't stack as neatly as did drum cases, speaker cabinets, and other, more solid items. But Gary-Michael Dahl has already addressed that problem.

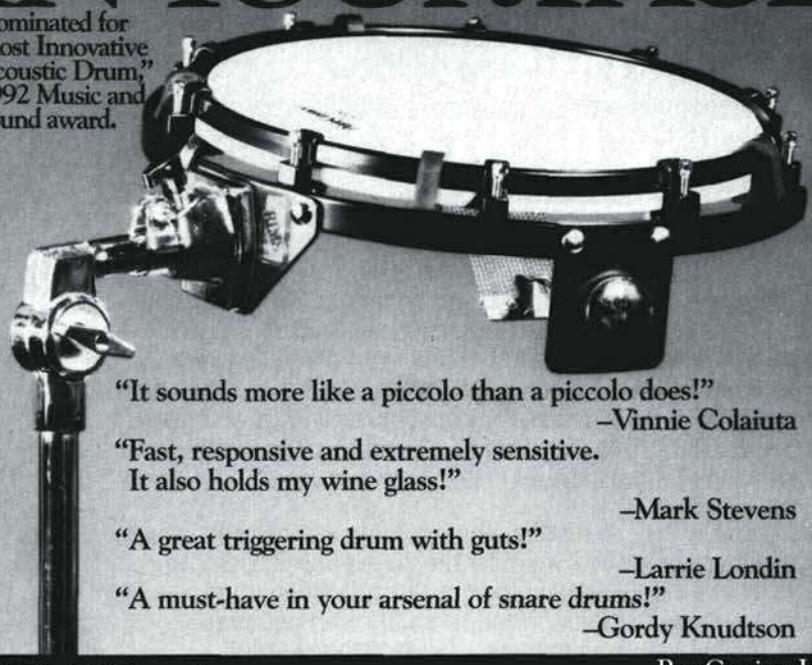


He offers a sizeable utility bag (suitable for drum stands) made with a special pouch designed to slip over the handle of the *Roller* in dolly mode. The bag is thus carried vertically at one end of the dolly, leaving the entire dolly free for more stackable equipment!

The *Rock N' Roller* has a load capacity of 500 (dolly) or 250 (hand truck) pounds, yet weighs only 33 pounds itself and meets airport baggage requirements for shipping. It's already in many major music stores, or you can contact the manufacturer at Music Industries Corp., 99 Tulip Ave., Floral Park, NY 11001, (516) 352-4110. The *Rock N' Roller* lists for $200; the optional hardware bag is available for $65. *(Thanks to Tom Sontag and Sam Jones at Sam Ash Music, Paramus, NJ, for their help in the preparation of this review.)*

IN YOUR FACE

Nominated for "Most Innovative Acoustic Drum," 1992 Music and Sound award.



"It sounds more like a piccolo than a piccolo does!" –Vinnie Colaiuta

"Fast, responsive and extremely sensitive. It also holds my wine glass!" –Mark Stevens

"A great triggering drum with guts!" –Larrie Londin

"A must-have in your arsenal of snare drums!" –Gordy Knudtson

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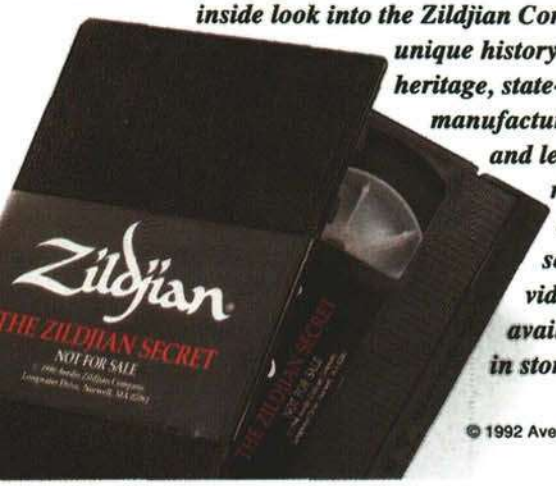

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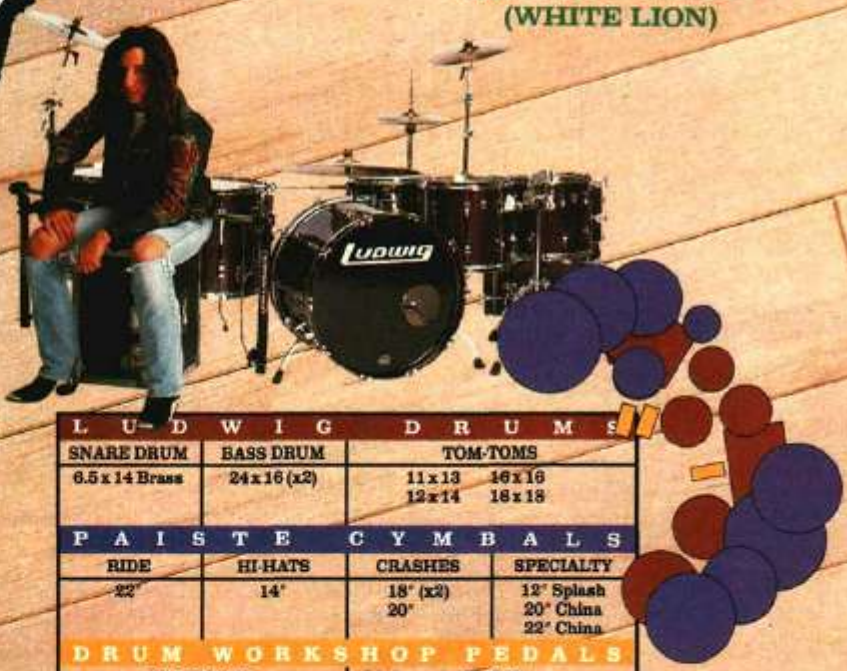

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D R U M W O R K S H O P P E D A L S	
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JIAN CYMBALS		
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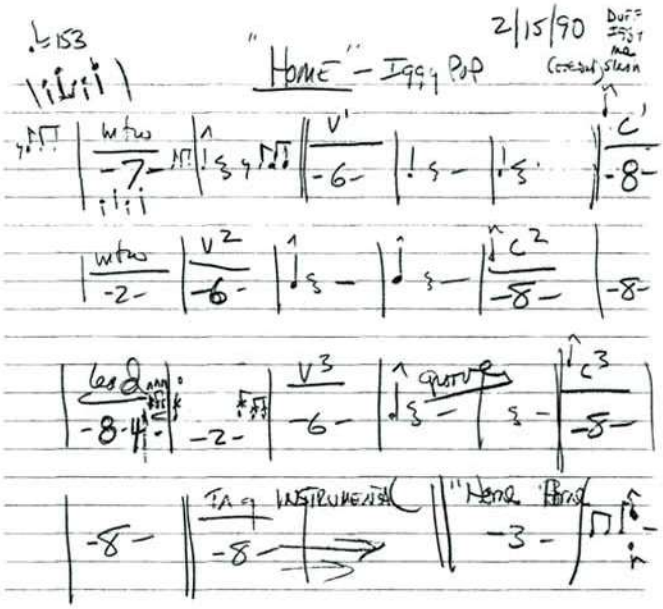
Making Drum Charts For Sessions

by Kenny Aronoff

Recently a drummer asked me through the *Ask A Pro* department about song transcriptions. He wanted to know how detailed my charts get when I'm in the studio, as opposed to when I'm at home and have time to write out thorough charts. I thought the answer to that question would make a good article!

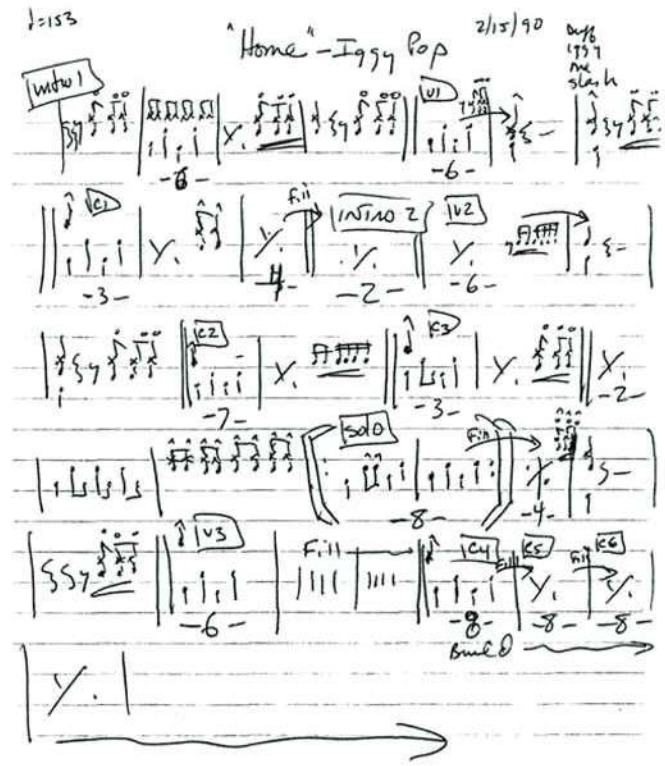
I started writing charts out long before I did studio work, as a way to learn what other drummers were playing on records. This not only taught me what they were doing, but it helped me develop my reading and writing skills. I also could file all this music and use it years later. Now that I do a lot of studio work, I have found that charting out songs helps me in *many* situations.

For example, when I get to a session, the producer will play the song that we're about to record for me. The two most important things I'm trying to figure out are what the overall beat (or beats) of the song is, and what the overall form or structure of the song is. As the producer plays the song, I sketch out its basic structure and make some notes about beat ideas. For some songs the beats are obvious, or the artist and the producer have something specific in mind, in which case a lot of my work is already done. Here is an example of a chart that I might have written out after listening to a song one time. The song, "Home," was from an Iggy Pop session. This is a real straight-ahead chart.

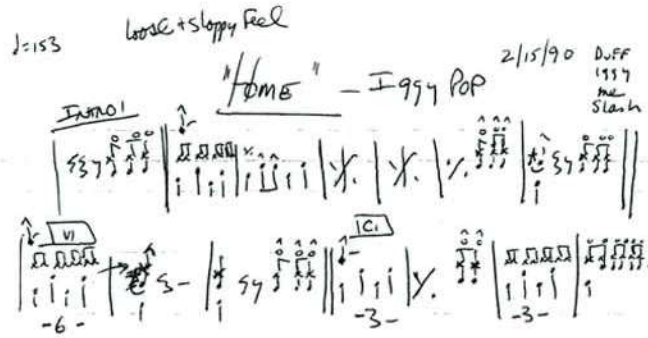


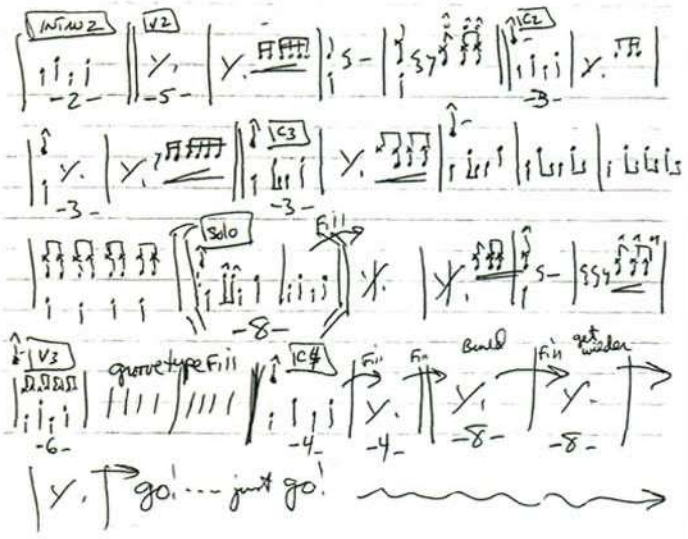
As I listen to the song again and again, I add more details to the chart. If the song is basic and is more *a feel* song than a technically complex one, then I don't make the chart complex. But if the song has odd measures or some specific fills and beats that the artist and producer want me to play, that's when my chart gets more complicated.

For example, the following might be the same chart as previously shown, but after the second or third listen. I started adding more details so I would always play the important parts every take. For me, reading is so second-nature that a chart relieves me of the hassles of trying to remember where I am in a song, and it allows me to focus on *the feel.*



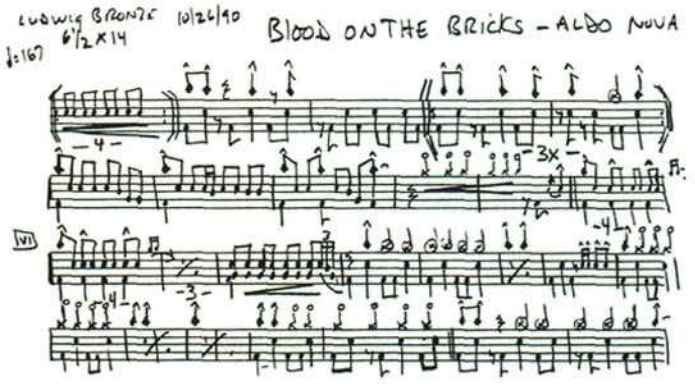
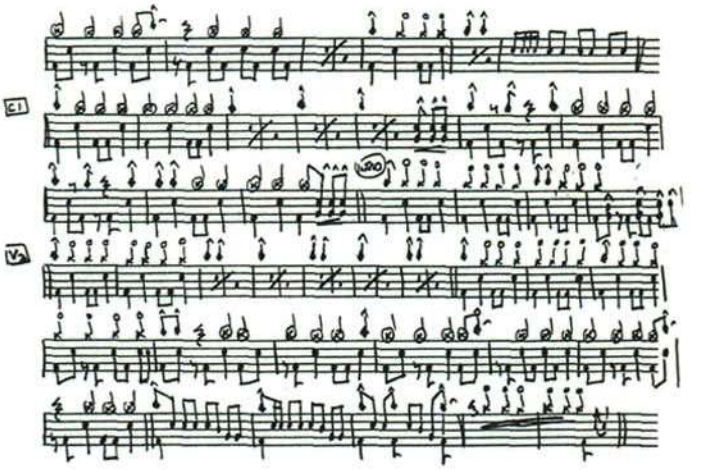
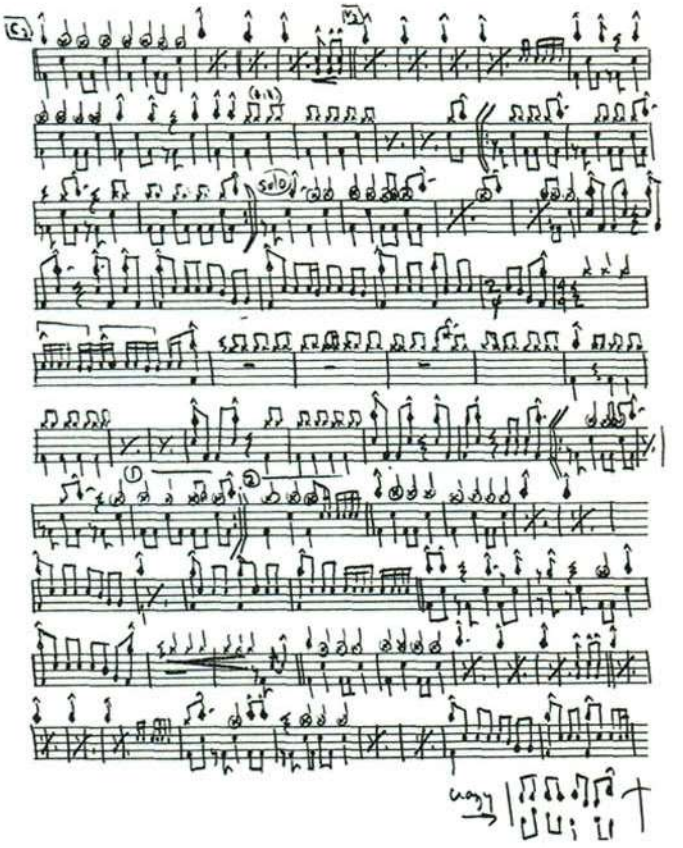
Once I start playing the song, the producer or the artist usually make changes in the song form. So my parts change also. They make suggestions, or I come up with new ideas, and during this process I keep writing the changes down. Here is the same chart again after making some arrangement and part changes, as I mentioned above. Notice that there are even *more* details in the chart now.



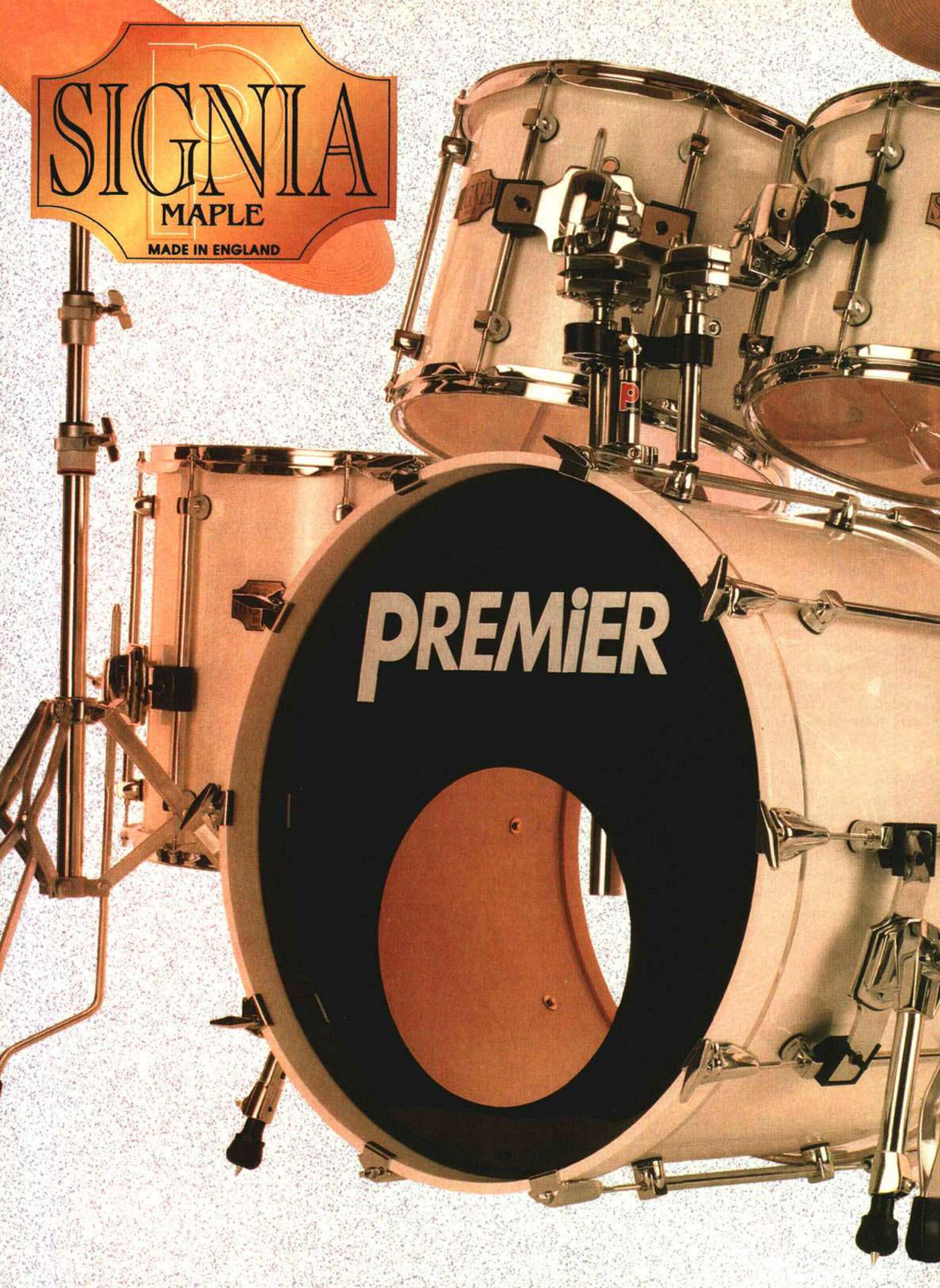


Some producers want me to play the same exact parts and fills every time, once we've established the part. So having a chart helps me be consistent. My most detailed charts are usually when an artist has spent a long time making very detailed demos. The artist is usually very specific about what they want me to play. Basically they've fallen in love with the drum parts on the demo. In this situation, nine times out of ten I end up playing almost exactly what is on the demo. That doesn't bother me because I end up adding my feel to the parts and the song. (I "Aronize" the parts.) You can make a drummer play the demo beats, but you can't take the soul out of the drummer.

Here is an example of a very detailed chart I wrote out when I was doing Aldo Nova's recent record. When I heard the demos, I knew that I'd better be prepared to play a lot of the demo parts, because Aldo was very specific about what he wanted. I was right. Not only was he specific about what he wrote, but I had to remember any changes I made in the course of rehearsing or recording, and play them each time after I made the changes. The only way I can remember such details is to write them down.



As you can see, the charts I make are quite often just outlines or basic road maps to a song. Other times the chart is extremely detailed. Either way, there is no question that the charts help me tremendously. That doesn't necessarily apply to everyone, but for me it works. Then again, I can't remember my name unless I write it down!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Herlin Riley
Working It With Wynton Marsalis

by Cleve Bryant, Jr.

Photo by Cleve Bryant, Jr.

Herlin Riley has been Wynton Marsalis's drummer for the past four years—but the 35-year-old native of New Orleans has been surrounded by music all his life. His grandfather, Frank Lastie, played with Louis Armstrong, and was the patriarch of a musical family. One of Herlin's uncles was also a drummer, but it was his trumpet-playing uncle Melvin who had the most immediate impact on young Herlin. As a result, although the youngster "became fascinated by the drums at an early age" and took lessons from his grandfather, his formal musical education took place on the trumpet. That education concluded after a brief stay at Mississippi Valley State College. The band department there was concentrating on football games; Herlin wanted to play jazz.

After leaving college, Herlin returned home to New Orleans, where he gigged with various artists—on trumpet. But a couple of opportunities to sub on drums established his reputation locally as a drummer—and also convinced Herlin to make the change permanently. He worked with Al Hirt for a year and with Ahmad Jamal for three and a half years—including three albums. He also played for the touring musicals One Mo' Time *and* Satchmo: America's Musical Legend. *When the latter show closed after only 18 weeks, Herlin was concerned about the status of his career. He was approaching his 31st birthday and wondering where the next gig would come from. The answer came in a call from Wynton Marsalis on February 14, 1988. He joined the group the next day—which just happened to* be *his 31st birthday.*

CB: How did you land the job as Wynton's drummer?
HR: It happened in several stages. First of all, it helped that I was from New Orleans and that I was one of the better drummers in the city. Ellis Marsalis, Wynton's father, put together a group to play at the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival—and I happened to be a member of that group. Reginald Veal was also a member of that group, and he's the bass player with Wynton right now. Wynton came into town to sit in with his father at the Jazz Fest appearance. He dug the feeling of the band and what was happening musically onstage. After that performance, Wynton told me that he liked my drumming and he'd keep my name in mind.

Also, during the time I was working with Ahmad Jamal, we played at Fat Tuesday's in New York City, and Wynton came by to catch a set. He dug the set and once again said he'd keep me in mind. So, when his drummer, Jeff Watts, left, Wynton gave me a call.

CB: How would you describe your role as Wynton's drummer?
HR: My primary role is one of support—keeping time and supporting the band. I am not really incorporated all that often into the solos, although I do occasionally get a chance to play them myself. This is due to the fact that our band has grown. We are now seven pieces, and the music is structured toward the sounds of the horns and more ensemble playing—as opposed to a lot of interaction between the rhythm section, the drummer, and the soloist. Yet I can play freely, and that is what matters the most. But with that freedom comes the responsibility to play within the framework of the whole. I am responsible for providing a bed of swing—or a groove—for everything to lie on top of. Then I have to interact with the rhythm section in providing the swing, and I also have to interact with the soloists on both a dynamic and rhythmic level. So I have a healthy blend of freedom and responsibility.

CB: Does that mean that if the group were smaller you'd be featured more?
HR: Yes, my role changes with the size and shape and emphasis of the group. Right now my role is a supportive one.
CB: Fill in the blank for me: Playing with Wynton Marsalis is like...
HR: ...going to school, because he's very knowledgeable about the history of the music, and about the main players and shapers of the music. I feel fortunate being a part of Wynton's historical contribution to jazz. Twenty years from now, when people look back at this era in history and see who kept jazz music alive, the first name they'll remember is Wynton Marsalis. And for me to be associated with his music gives me some historical longevity. Wynton is carrying a banner, and I

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am running and drumming with him. Since joining Wynton's band, I've had to go back and research the history of my instrument. Doing that made me understand the function and the mechanics of what being a jazz drummer is all about. As a result, I've come to understand and accept my role as a jazz musician. That role is to pass on information to youngsters, the same way the elder musicians passed it on to me—especially because the sources of information on jazz are so limited today.

CB: How is being a jazz drummer different from being a drummer in other musical arenas?

HR: Being a jazz drummer allows you the freedom to create on the spot—to do things spontaneously. In most other musical arenas the drummer is given a pattern to play. That pattern seldom—if ever—changes throughout the duration of a tune. As a jazz drummer, I find that there are endless ways to address a pattern or a melody because the world of jazz is so broad. It incorporates the grooves of many musical idioms. In these idioms there is a basic beat or pattern to play, but that beat is manipulated in such a way that you can add or take away rhythms to make the beat organic. When a groove is organic, it breathes...it lives...it grows.

"As an artist I don't think anyone should ever be satisfied—not totally, anyway."

CB: Getting back to your onstage playing, how much creative freedom do you have when you solo? How often do you get to solo?

HR: Well, I get to solo once or twice a night. I try to play solos that tell stories. The solos begin at a very minimal kind of level and build until they rise to a *crescendo.* I try to be creative and to bring people through different moods of a particular theme.

CB: How much of a solo is emotion and how much is technique?

HR: It's all technique to me.

CB: Isn't there some emotion?

HR: Oh sure! It's all technique, but emotions come through. It's like a language. The technique is the words you use, and the emotion is how you put those words together to complete your thought.

CB: How often do you get to listen to live recordings of your playing, and what do you listen for when you do get the opportunity?

HR: From time to time we do record particular gigs, so I get to listen to our performances on a somewhat regular basis. The main thing I listen for is to hear if I'm keeping good time. Secondly, I listen to hear if I'm interacting and meshing with the bass—because that's the primary function of the rhythm section of a jazz band. The bass player and the drummer must really lock up and play together. Our rhythm section also includes the pianist, so I listen to him closely as well. Third, I examine how I am interacting with the soloist, if I am in tune with what he wants, what he's doing during his solo. If he wants to play soft, then I accompany him at a softer volume, or if he's requesting some fire and wants a little heat, I accompany him with some hot swing bashing.

CB: How critical are you of your own playing?

HR: As artists, we all have to be critical of our work so that we can improve. So I critique every angle of my playing—and I'm never totally satisfied. That's not to say that I haven't found some sense of satisfaction with the things I've done. But I always listen to a piece of music that I've done and find something that I could have done better. As an artist I don't think anyone should ever be satisfied—not totally, anyway. If you ever become totally satisfied then you stunt further growth, and you'll never fulfill your potential. Like a tree, any artist must always continue to reach skyward.

CB: What albums have you recorded with Wynton?

HR: My first recording with Wynton was *The Crescent City Christmas Card,* then I did *Majesty Of The Blues, Standard Time Volume 2: Intimacy Calling,* and *Standard Time Volume 3: The Resolution Of Romance*—which was really special because it was recorded with Wynton's dad, Ellis. Next was the soundtrack done for the movie *Tune In Tomorrow.* The latest recordings are *Uptown Ruler* and *Levee Low Moan,* volumes two and three, respectively, of Wynton's recent triple compact disc release.

CB: How involved do you get with tuning before you perform?

HR: I am a nit-picker. I tune at the high end both on stage and in the studio, solely because I am a jazz drummer. I want the drums to resonate, to sing, so that when I hit the drums softly the sound will carry over as well as when I strike the drums hard. The top head is the head that actually gives you the tone and the pitch that you want to get out of the drum. The bottom head allows that tone and that pitch to resonate. So, I tune *both* heads until they're just right to my ear.

CB: What kind of drums do you use?

HR: Right now I'm playing a Corder drumset that I had custom-made. The drums have thin shells, which allow them to resonate. The set includes 8x10 and 8x12 toms and a 13x14 floor tom. The bass drum is 14x18; my snare drum is 6 1/2x14. I wanted those exact dimensions because, as I said earlier, I like the high pitch tuning for jazz. My cymbals include 14" Zildjian hi-hats, a 22" ride cymbal with rivets and a 20" ride without rivets, and 18" and 20" crash cymbals with rivets. My drumsticks

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are Vic Firth *7As*.

CB: What has been the biggest challenge of your professional life?

HR: The biggest challenge, without question, is trying to balance my life as a professional musician with my domestic life. Being on the road so much has an impact on my family. The fact that I'm not there more often than I am affects my marital relationship as well as my relationship with each of my five children. For example, I'm not there for little league games and dancing lessons, for birthdays and homework. I'm not there for most of those activities that people with normal lifestyles take for granted. However, when I *am* home my children know that I support them and that I'm in their corner. They get my quality time when I'm off the road.

CB: What advice do you have to offer to aspiring professional drummers?

HR: Keep practicing and keep on pushing. Bear in mind that the cream always rises to the top. If you work hard enough at any given craft, sooner or later you will collect your dues. Most important, however, is that you must study and learn the history of your instrument. A musician without a knowledge of the history of his or her instrument is like a vine with roots, but no soil in which to grow.

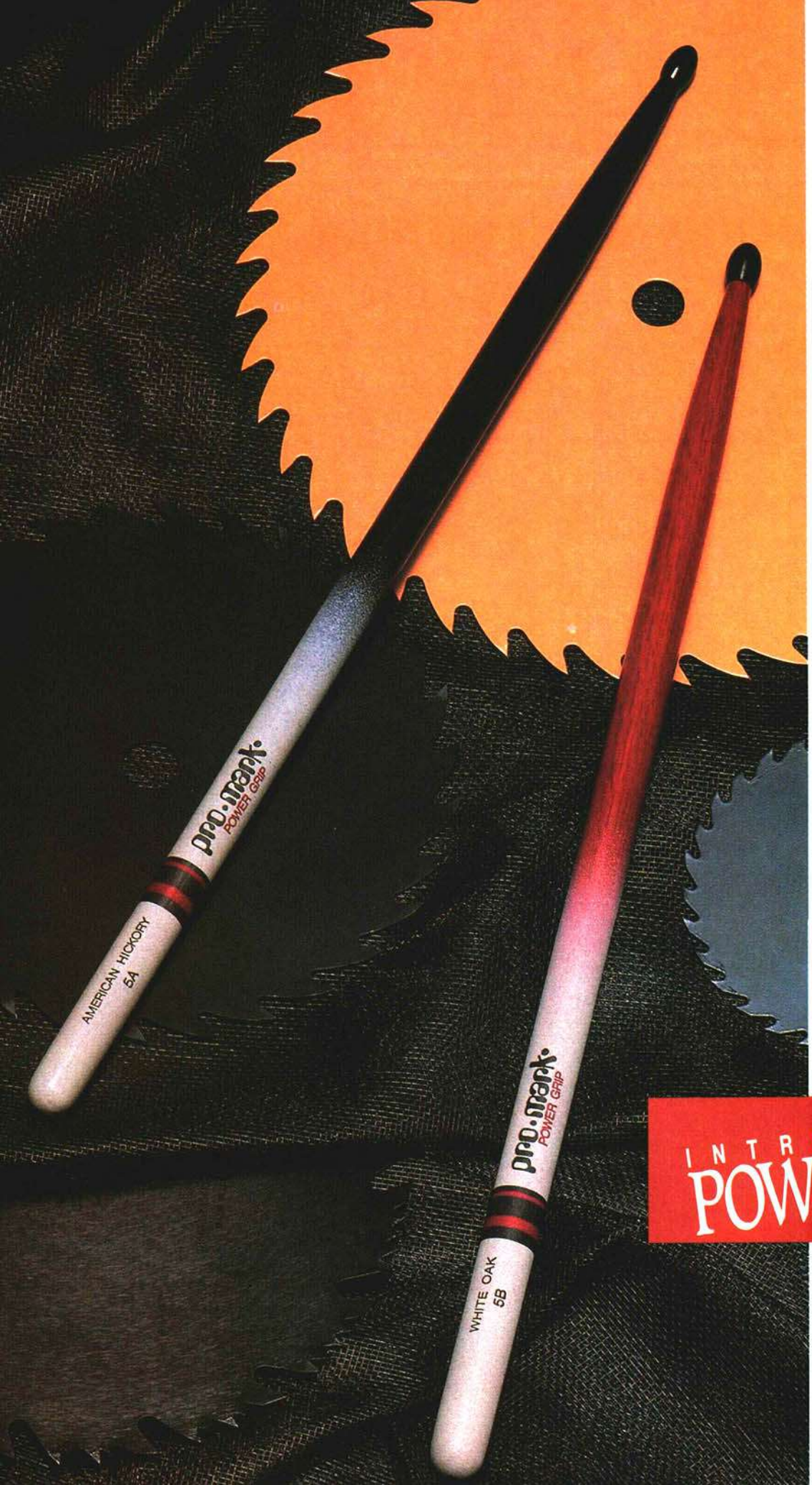
Also, you have to have humility. Your driving motivation can be neither money nor fame. To quote a writer named Ralph Ellison, the driving motivation for musicians must be "...the will to achieve the most eloquent expression of idea-emotions through the technical mastery of their instruments and the give and take, the subtle rhythmical shaping and blending of idea, tone, and imagination demanded of group improvisation."

CB: How would you defend the statement that "Drummers are the unsung heroes of music"?

HR: [with a big grin] The metaphor is accurate. There aren't many drummers who are leaders—who actually write and produce their own tunes. But you show me a successful band, *any* successful band, and I'll show you a good drummer.

CB: In terms of your own career, do you plan to be a drummer for the rest of your life?

HR: Certainly. Drumming is the thing that I love the most—as well as the thing that I do best. Playing the drums is an outlet through which I can be expressive. For me, it provides a zest for life.



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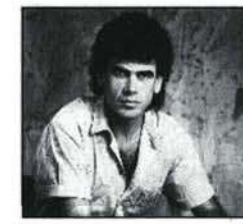
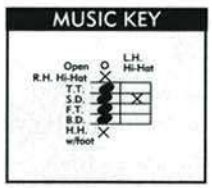
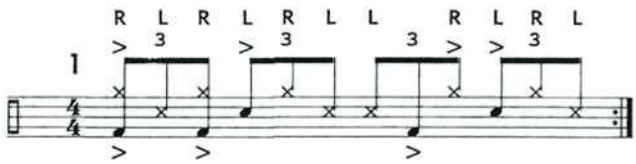
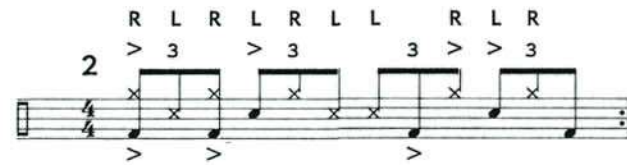
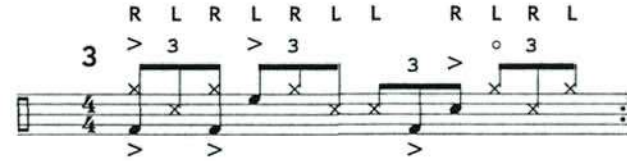
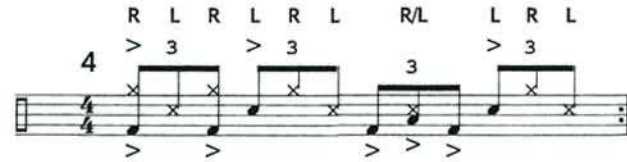
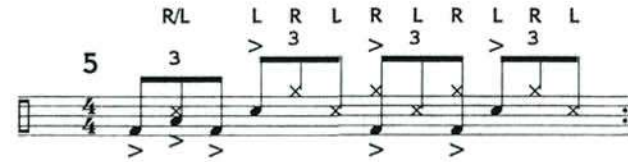
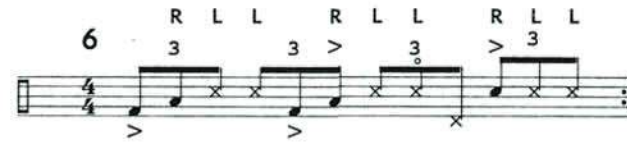
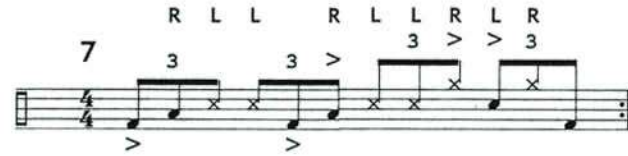
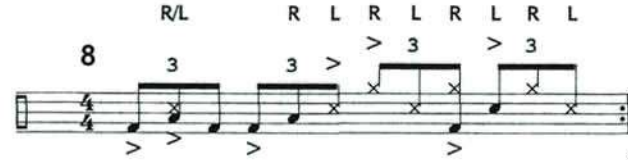


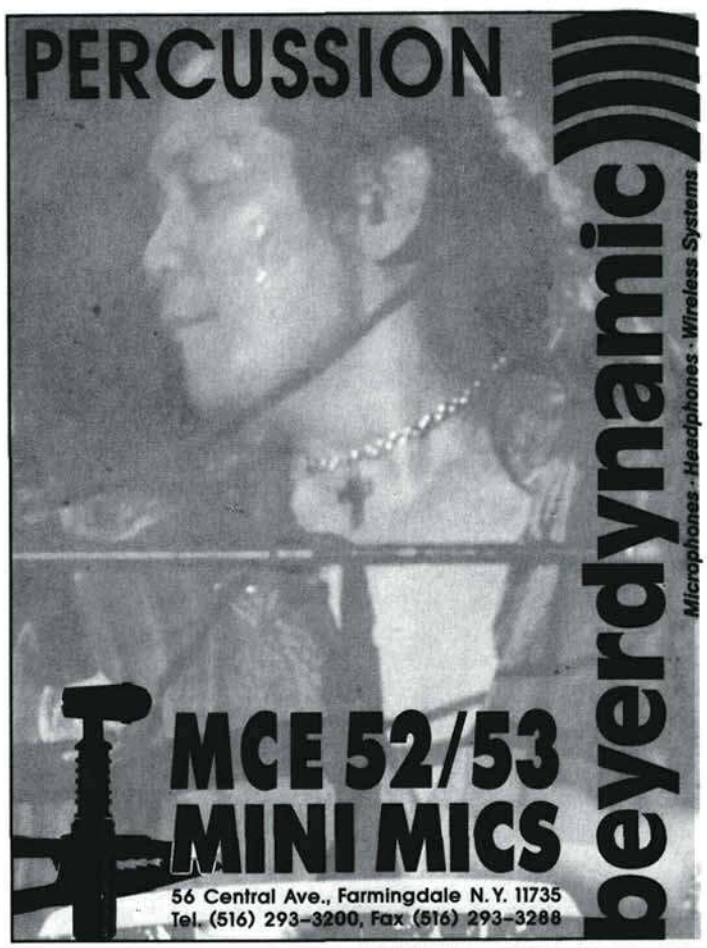
by David Garibaldi

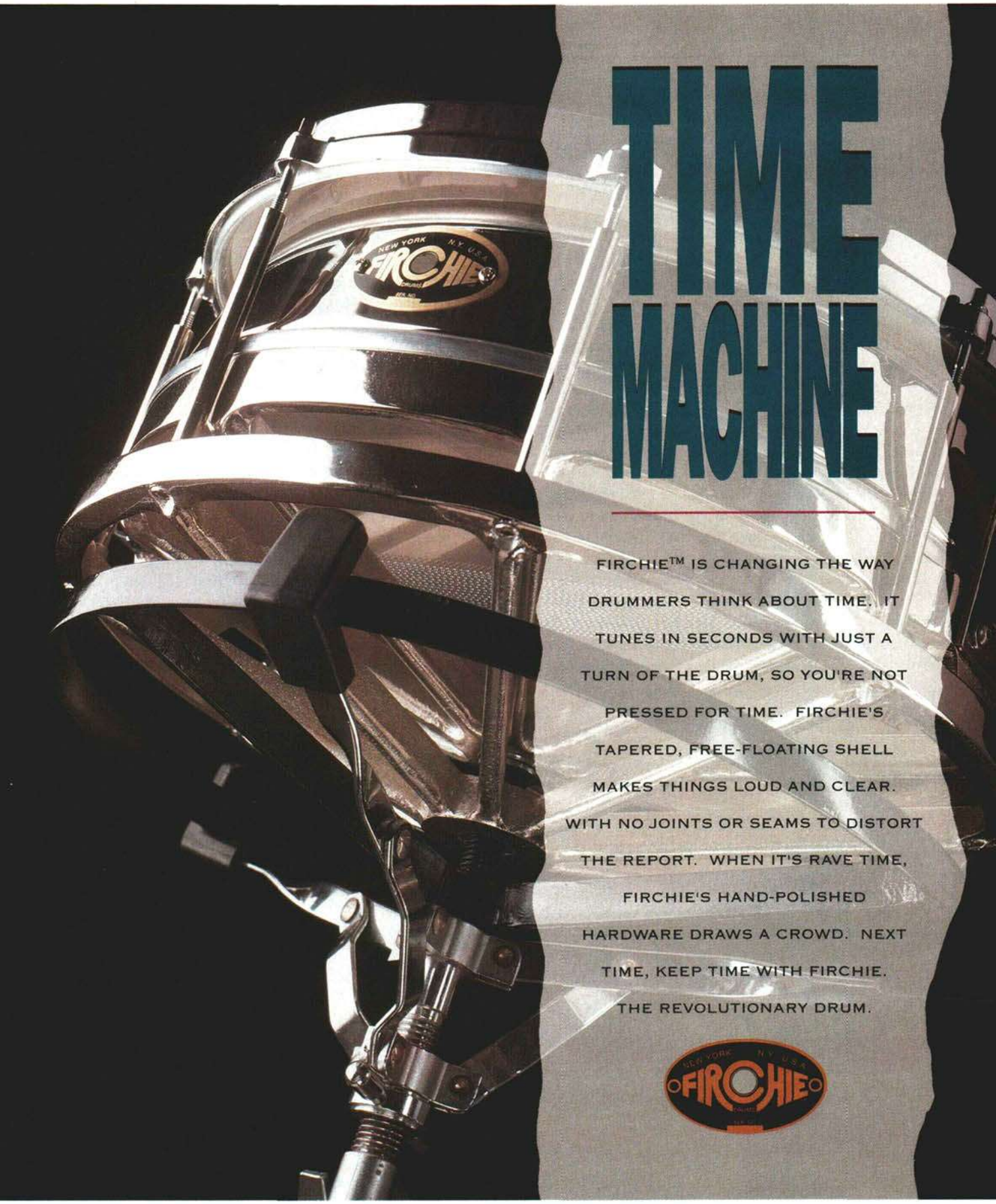


One area that is virtually unexplored in contemporary drumset playing is that of 8th-note triplets. American pop music uses mostly 8th and 16th notes, and mainstream jazz is based on triplets, but rarely do we see the triplet used in funk or even in an electric-jazz setting to play grooves. The following exercises are in the funk/fusion style and utilize the 8th-note triplet. Also included are stickings for each pattern.









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Broadening Your Horizons: Drums And Dance

by Michael Blair

In many cultures, drumming and dancing are considered one and the same. A town or village can communicate with itself through gatherings that focus on music and storytelling. Complex rhythms and body coordination are taught to children as a matter of course, rather than as "training in the arts." Family and cultural history is passed on, and new generations are expected to learn the traditions.

Not so in late-twentieth century "western" societies. We have increasingly separated art from life and turned to television to inform us about how our system works. Our own movement traditions have been watered down in grade school "folk dancing" and the mass market pseudo excitement of TV shows like *Fame*.

But, there are real multi-cultural dance/theatre opportunities to explore. One way of researching how drums and dance can work together (and maybe make some money at it) is by getting involved with contemporary modern dance. With its combination of ballet, jazz, avant-garde, and "world" styles, music for modern dance gives us ways of getting physical experience in improvisation and composition. The additional reward of improving one's listening and visualization skills is of equal importance. So, maybe while you are "in between engagements" or looking for new inspiration, diving into music for dance could be useful.

My interest in modern dance began in college (back in the early '70s). My advisor was composer Barney Childs. (Check out his solo snare drum pieces "Out Back At The Drum Shop.") With Dr. Childs' guidance, a number of us improvising musicians and dancers started a performing group. We made up pieces for ourselves and also investigated work written for small multi-discipline ensembles.

Being a percussion major, I was exposed to the music of John Cage, Lou Harrison, and Harry Partch. I found out that Cage and Harrison did considerable work exploring timbre, rhythm, and structure. And, of course, Mr. Partch designed his own unique percussion instruments tuned to a 43-note scale. Further research showed that Mr. Cage had a long relationship as music director of the Merce Cunningham Dance Co. and that Mr. Partch was quite concerned with having all his performers act and move theatrically.

I played the music of Steve Reich and found he had collaborated frequently with choreographer Laura Dean (who later went on to write her own music). Also, I was able to work with percus-

sionist/composer Michael Udow (who now heads the percussion department at the University of Michigan—Ann Arbor). Dr. Udow has made many pieces vigorously exploring timbre/rhythm/movement with choreographer Nancy Udow.

Other inter-art connections became apparent. What the record stores now call "world music" has always existed. For example, the jazz world incorporated aspects of Brazilian rhythms long before current pop stars found them useful. The framework of the blues is found in African folksongs. And a common cultural thread of these forms is their direct connection to dancing. The cross-fertilization of music, painting, theatre, and dance that began exploding in the United States during the late '60s proved to be an enormous working playground where one could learn one's craft and also how to organize creative information (two necessities, whether you play for Guns N' Roses or the Boston Symphony!).

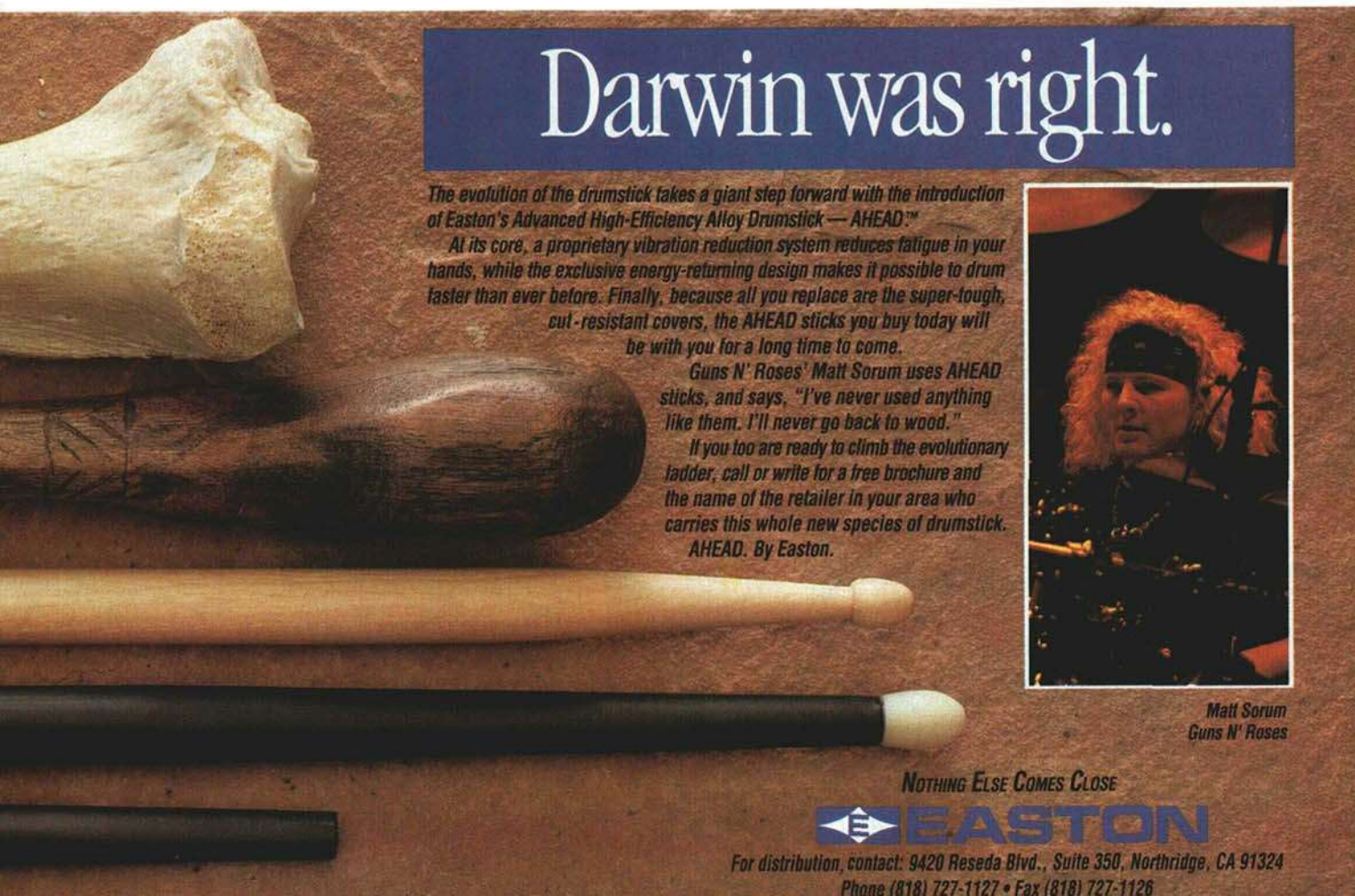
As a member of the Paul Winter Consort (many moons ago), I wrote music for dance and gave improvisation workshops. The band itself improvised scores for choreographers, mimes, and theatre projects.

For many years in New York, I paid the bills playing music for dance classes and teaching music/composition at various universities. Under the National Endowment's Artists-In-Schools program, I taught all levels of school with a movement specialist who was a member of the Martha Graham Dance Co.

It wasn't a big surprise that many of my friends and colleagues also worked with modern dance. For example, percussionist David Van Tiegham's music for choreographer Twyla Tharp served as the basis for his first solo album, *These Things Happen.* David Byrne also wrote for Ms. Tharp. *Saturday Night Live* saxophonist Lenny Pickett has written award-winning scores for New York dance projects. And if memory serves, the incomparable Max Roach wrote music for the Alvin Ailey Dance Co.

Rock music is becoming more fused with avant-garde theater all the time. The aforementioned Laura Dean staged the movement for Peter Gabriel's *Security* tour. David Bowie collaborated on a video with the Canadian Dance troupe La-La-La Human Steps. I recently saw (and listened to) a French circus group called Archaos. Along with dancers, stilt walkers, and Fellini-meets-the-Road Warrior theatrics, the band came screaming into the tent on top of a huge futuristic truck (and they were loud!).

Most dancers, no matter what their performance context, are highly trained professionals. From rap videos to the most esoteric conceptual art, the movement training is an intense combination of ballet, jazz, and modern dance classes.



To get a glimpse of how these movement artists learn their craft, let's enter a dance studio for a second. A musically inventive teacher can guide the class through repetitive physical exercises that sharpen their rhythmic skills as well as strengthen their bodies. An experienced, energetic musician can show the teacher a thing or two about texture and flow. An attentive, eager class can push the instructor and player to more creative options and deeper concepts. As you can imagine, the process is a team effort.

The musician must have stamina, solid grooves, and turn-on-a-dime flexibility. Beats/tempos for exercises can change drastically or go on forever. I remember early morning classes in college where the first series of movements went on (without stopping) for forty-five minutes...then a break...then forty-five more minutes.... Yipes. I got my hand drum callouses together in a hurry. Plus I learned to subtly shift rhythms and keep things interesting without disrupting the flow. (Not to mention singing, playing piano, and having all four limbs hitting something, to give the dancers new sounds.)

There are many goals, nuances, expectations, and possibilities in a dance class. I suggest you go to your school/university/professional studio and observe. Find musicians who already play or compose for dance. Ask them if you can watch a class or rehearsal. Perhaps one of the many styles within the genre will suit you.

The following is an excerpt from a talk I had with another percussionist/composer, David Yoken. We first met in New York and now spend a lot of time in Stockholm. (It's a small world after all.) David has worked with the hippest of avant-garde choreographers and the coolest of hoofing tap dancers. I asked him about his experiences.

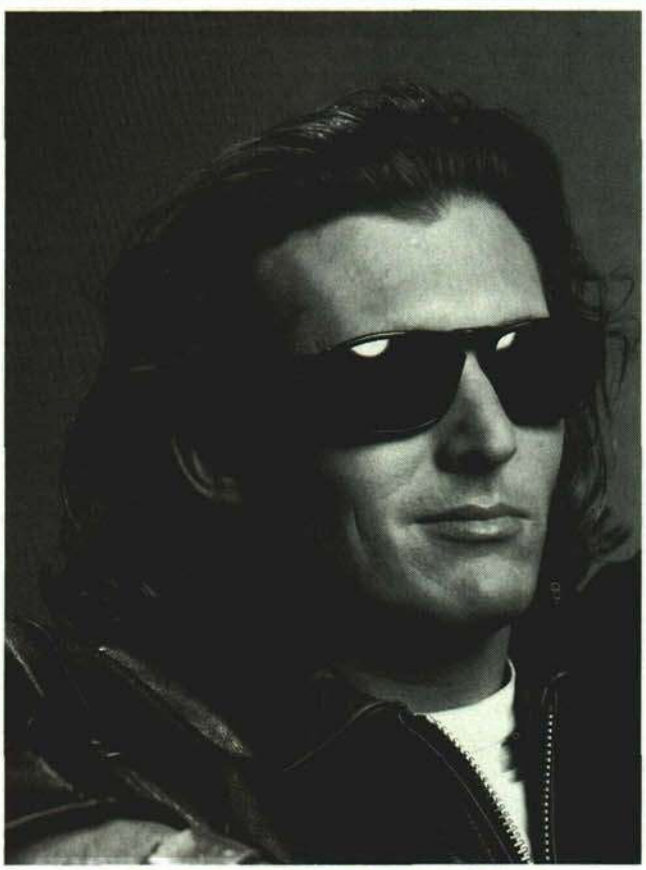
MB: How has your involvement with dance affected your percussive pursuits?

DY: There are two main aspects that I greatly value when working with dancers. The first and most important is the concept of time. Working with dance has created an E.S.P. regarding what I think of as the "tactility" of time. In other words, tempo, pulse, meter, and rhythm have become physical entities.

Secondly, most of the dancers have had an intuitive sensibility concerning sound. I have had the concept of timbre reinforced. From their immediate reaction to something I have played, I've been able to expand the range of my instruments. When I was touring with hoofers The Copasetics, I spent a lot of time listening to the color of their tapping. The "melodies" were amazing. That inspired me to get inside the sound of the brushes, to explore the rhythmic and timbral/melodic possibilities of the snare drum.

MB: What jobs have you gotten through your modern dance work?

DY: I have toured around the world as a musician/composer/improviser. I met Laura Dean in 1977, and my time as a musical director of her dance company was a great experience. We had



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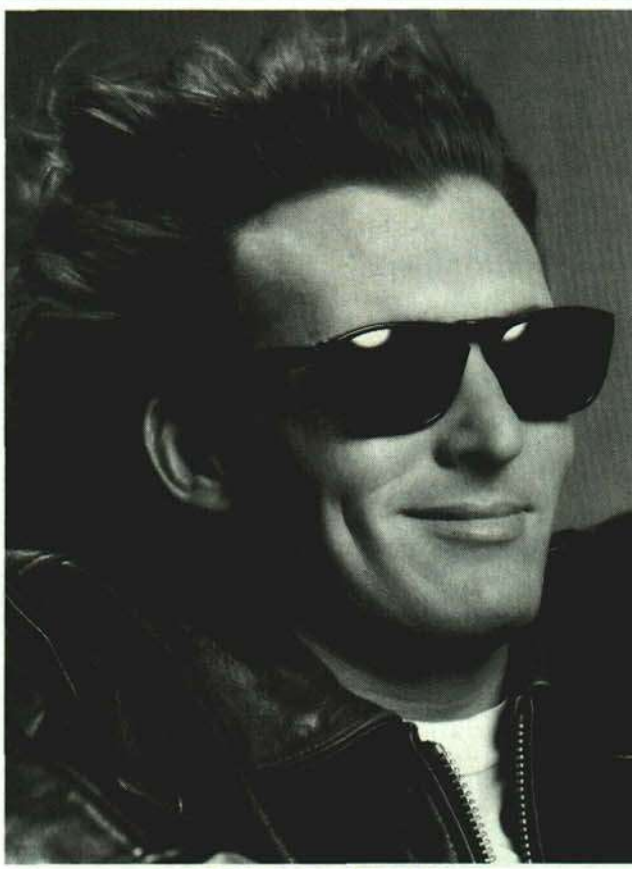


HIGH BIAS

fantastic tours of New Zealand, Indonesia, India, and Eastern and Western Europe. I have kept in contact with a number of sponsors I met on those tours and have been invited back as a solo percussionist. It is a matter of networking, as corny as that sounds.

MB: How do you approach playing dance classes?

DY: I am a musician/composer/improviser contributing to the dance students' overall musicality. It is critical to have three basic percussive "food groups"—skin, metal, and wood—in a working setup. Also, homemade and exotic instruments are important. While I am playing, I am on a mission to open the dancers' ears to the art of listening.

MB: What about modern dance as a job/business?

DY: Although working with dance is an extremely rewarding musical career alternative, one should balance this aspect with other possibilities. It is very easy to become burnt out. But the rewards can also be fantastic. It can be full of magical moments.

I definitely second that.

I received a letter not long ago from a former schoolmate who lives and plays in the Pacific Northwest. His name is Don Berman. When we were in school, I always appreciated Don's attitude and sense of humor. His comments reflect the more personal rewards of working with different art forms.

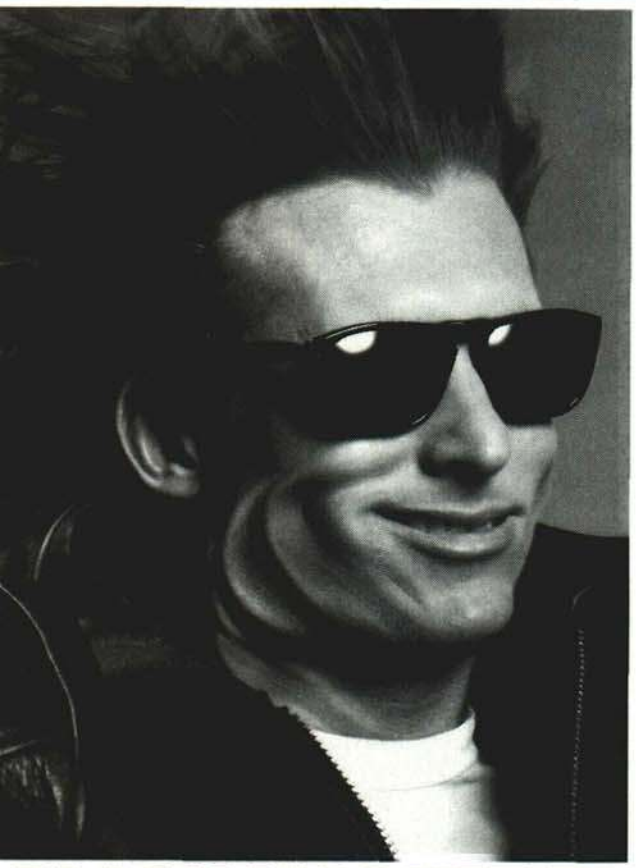
Don states: "The most dramatic memory I have of working with dancers is a class I played in Seattle one night. Near the end of the evening, the women were doing freestyle stuff back and forth across the room. Two of the women in particular were leading the pack, smiling and laughing and really locking into what I was playing on my conga and drumkit.

After class, I went over to say something to these two about how much fun it had been working with them. To my surprise, they were deaf. They had picked up on my drum beats through vibrations in the wooden floor. So, by drumming with dancers, I had been able to uniquely communicate soul to soul. I got a great thrill out of that."

That says it all pretty well. Whether you want a gig with Aerosmith, Public Enemy, or the Berlin Philharmonic, make sure you go looking for new sources of information and inspiration. By squeezing a multitude of creative experiences into a single beat, you could come up with something new, something uniquely you. Buddy Rich began tap-dancing when he was three years old. We all have a long way to catch up.

And, of course, let's hope the music always wins.

Besides working as a left-of-center percussionist/drummer for artists such as Lou Reed, Michael Blair has made music for many modern choreographers. They include: Mark Morris, Jennifer Muller, Luis Falco, Twyla Tharp Co., Merce Cunningham Co., Lar Lubovitch Co., Doug Varone, Diane Elliot, Murray Louis, and Alwin Nikolais. Michael has been on the faculties of Sarah Lawrence and Hunter Colleges, and the Juilliard School.



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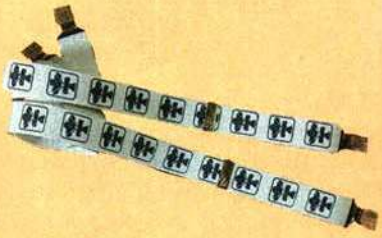

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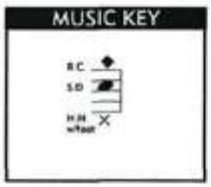
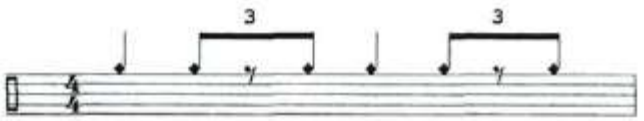
by Rick Mattingly



Traditionally, drummers have learned to play jazz by learning to coordinate various rhythms against the following ride-cymbal pattern.

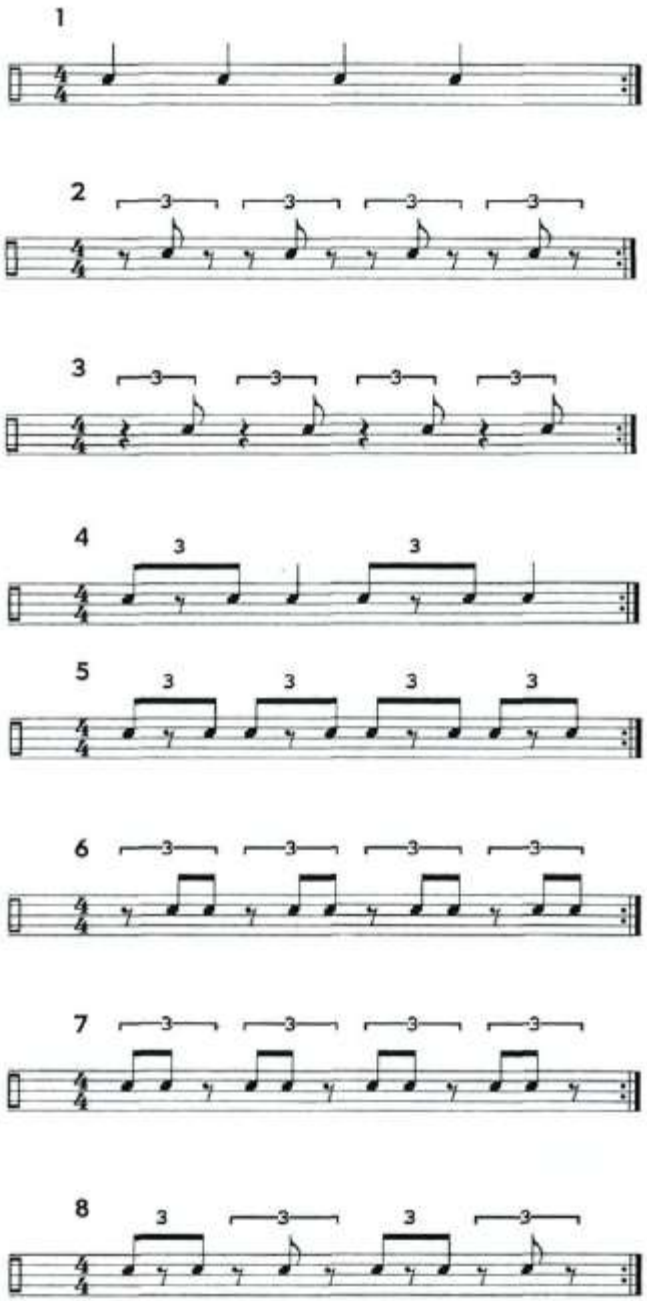


Once you've learned to do that, you are often told, "Okay, to sound more modern, don't play that same pattern over and over. Break up the time however you want." Having learned only to coordinate the snare drum and bass drum against a single pattern, you are now presented with total freedom. Unfortunately, you're probably not quite ready for it.

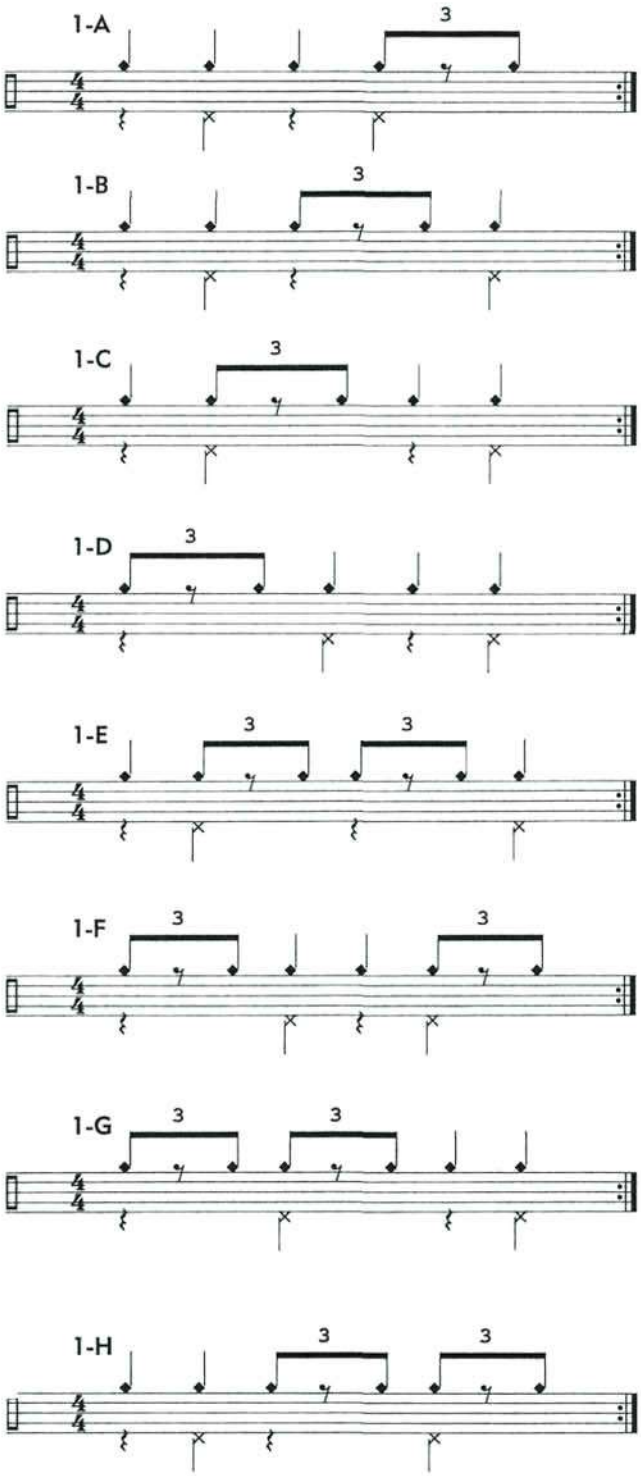
There are two typical problems when one attempts to break up the time, having only practiced the above pattern. One is that the independence you thought you had is suddenly nonexistent, or at least not quite as together as you thought it was. As long as you were playing the standard "ding dinga-ding," you were fine, because you had practiced enough that it had become automatic. But now that you are trying to play different patterns on the cymbal, the snare and bass drums are not quite as flexible. You find yourself playing a cymbal note every time you strike one of the drums, or reverting back to the standard pattern out of habit.

The other problem is that your overall feel has suffered. You spent a good deal of time learning to make that ride pattern swing. But just getting that one to feel good doesn't guarantee that anything you do on the ride cymbal from here on out will also swing. Each different pattern has its own groove, and you have to develop each one separately.

The patterns and exercises in this series of articles will help you make the transition from the standard "ding dinga-ding" ride pattern to a freer way of playing, where you can break up the time at will and still maintain independence and swing.

For starters, here are some basic rhythms that you should be able to coordinate on snare drum and bass drum against the basic jazz ride-cymbal pattern. Make sure that you are not accenting the 2 and 4 on the ride cymbal, which is an easy habit to fall into with the standard pattern. Once you start breaking up the time, you start realizing the importance of a consistent quarter-note pulse, and if you have been relying on accented 2's and 4's as part of your feel, you are going to be in trouble when you attempt to vary that pattern.

Assuming that you can do that, here are several different ride-cymbal patterns. Practice each of them against the above rhythm patterns on both snare drum and bass drum. Concentrate on the feel and on keeping the quarter-note pulse consis-

tent. As indicated, maintain the hi-hat on 2 and 4.



For further study, substitute each of the above ride patterns for the standard pattern given in the exercises in the Chapin book. The rhythms in Ted Reed's *Syncopation* book are also good to play against these ride patterns.

Our next article will focus on two-measure ride patterns.

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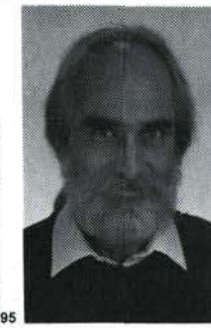

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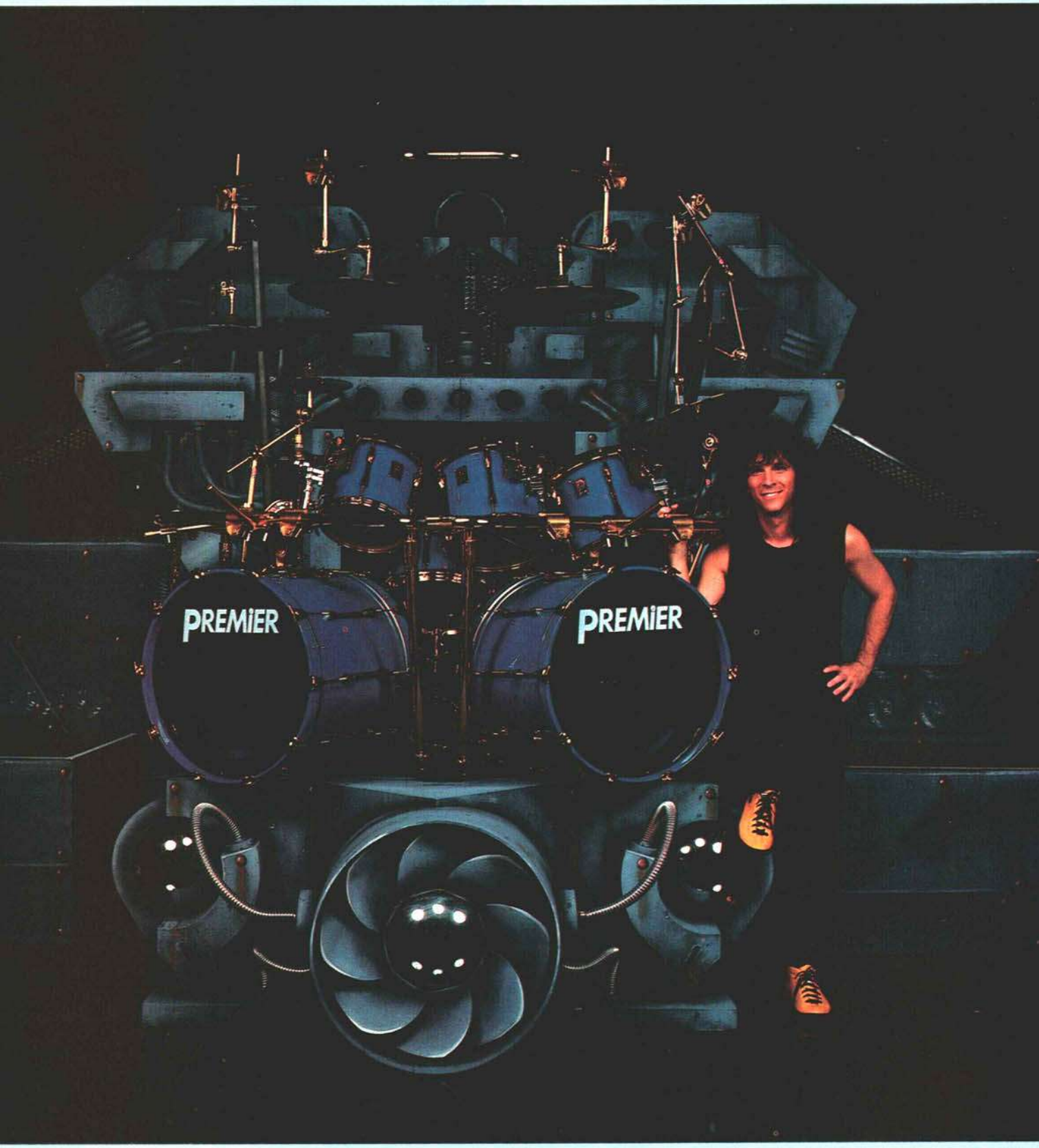

Jan Hammer

by Teri Saccone

You probably know Jan Hammer for his inventive keyboard wizardry, prolific songwriting, and sound scoring for motion pictures and television. Perhaps you're aware that he's a Grammy award winner, that he was an original member of the Mahavishnu Orchestra, and that he's played on albums with Jeff Beck, Mick Jagger, Al Di Meola, Stanley Clarke, Tommy Bolin, Elvin Jones, and Tony Williams, among others. But chances are that you don't *know that Jan Hammer is also an incredibly gifted drummer.*

How good is he? When you consider that he's played a full kit for several of the the above-mentioned musicians—as well as turning in some absolutely stunning kit drumming for his many solo releases—it should be clear that this guy's for real when it comes to the drums.

In the following interview, the always affable Jan discusses his experiences as a drummer, his affinity for the drums, and the significance he has always placed—no matter the instrument or the context—on the beautiful language of rhythm.

TS: As a child, you were classically trained on piano. But you also discovered the drums early on. Why did you opt to focus more on the former?

JH: In the early '50s, drummers had something of an image problem. They were really cool—but not quite always considered to be musicians. To gain respect, you had to be a "real" musician. I know it's ridiculous, but it was part of getting a musical education. I was steered into playing piano by my parents, but drums were something I discovered totally on my own and played mostly for fun. So it really balanced things out when I was a kid: I *worked* on the piano, and *I played* on the drums.

TS: What do you get from playing the drums that you don't derive from other instruments?

JH: I can immerse myself in a completely physical way into the drums. With most everything else, you have to channel all your energies into your fingertips. With drums, it's all four limbs—plus the head—that make the rhythms flow the right way.

TS: You've played drums on over twenty albums. Did you suggest taking over the drums, or did the suggestions come from the artists with whom you worked?

JH: When I was writing a piece with someone, it was easier for me to just sit behind the drumkit *and play* rhythms out than to say, "I think it should go like this...." That was how I first got into playing the drums more actively on albums.

Also, when working with bands, there's always some time in between rehearsals or soundchecks where off-the-cuff jamming starts happening. I would always be the first one to jump on the drums. In the early days with Mahavishnu Orchestra, for instance, between gigs I would play drums with John [McLaughlin] on guitar and Jerry [Goodman] on fiddle. We got along with that so well that when John decided to do the *Love, Devotion, Surrender* album with Carlos Santana, he asked me to play drums on that.

TS: Judging from the unbelievable amount of music that you make, and the variety of contexts in which you work, challenges don't inhibit you. But did you have the slightest reservation in playing drums on that first album when you were only known professionally for playing keyboards?

JH: None whatsoever. [laughs] As they say, there was something larger than me that I had to follow. It wasn't something like, "Gee, wouldn't it be nice if I could play drums with these guys?" My head was completely beyond that. I was more into, "Let's go and play!"

TS: Were you involved with any touring on that?

JH: Well, there were several drummers involved on the record. Billy Cobham played on the tour.

TS: Of course you played with Cobham in Mahavishnu, and later with greats like Tony Williams, Elvin Jones, and Simon Phillips. Being a part-time drummer yourself, what do you relate to in a drummer, and which drummer did you best communicate with musically?

JH: Having played drums for so many years makes my rhythmic sense in playing keyboards very locked in to whatever a good drummer is doing. So I'd say I have always related to drummers very well. I was able to completely click with Billy Cobham right from the beginning. It was just amazing how we could lock

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rhythmically. That was one of the major parts of how that band clicked: We were all so rhythmically connected. Again, I always had the easiest time in relating to the drummer in any band I was in because I spoke the common language. And sometimes we didn't have to speak; it was just understood in a rhythmic sense.

As far as who I enjoyed playing with the most, that's really hard to say. On the jazz side of things, in the early '70s I played a lot of concerts with Elvin Jones, and I would have to say that was "it." [laughs] As far as a drummer who takes the instrument to a new stratosphere, he's the one. Anyone who is still learning the drums owes it to himself or herself to put on some headphones and study this man, because he is ridiculous.

I grew up in Czechoslovakia listening to Elvin on all the John Coltrane records and all the other things he ever played on. He was the guy who just totally busted everything wide open. The only other person who transcends the jazz thing to a more universal drumming is Tony Williams, who is probably my favorite drummer of all time. We played some concerts together last summer, which was great fun.

TS: Did that include both your and Tony's material?

JH: It was much more of a rock/pop setting. He played a lot of my music from the last ten or fifteen years, and we played a lot of his tunes too, which had a little *jazzier* flavor. But basically it was electric, driving music. We did some festivals around the East Coast and Midwest. It was the first time that I was actually on stage playing live in about five years, and it felt phenomenal.

TS: Having a player like Tony on a kit playing some of your material that originally was programmed must have put a whole new spin on it.

JH: Oh yeah, that's a whole other style of playing this music.

TS: You've been credited—or discredited, depending on one's opinion about programming—with pioneering a lot of drum programming and some of the inherent technology. You still tend to program drums on your current projects rather than use a live kit.

JH: There are two very obvious reasons why people started using sampled and sequenced drums. The sampling allows you to recall the ideal sound of the drums every time—as opposed to tuning the drums, setting up the mic's properly, and tweaking the recording console just to get the right EQ levels, which all just takes forever. It became so much easier to instantly recall any component sound of a kit. On top of that, being able to sequence it all very acurately did even more. Some people object to that, but I think there is a way to program drums so they really sound good. You just have to do it with a sense and

feel for it. Bad programming will obviously still show up.

What's happening now is that we've come full circle: people are combining sequenced drum parts with live drum parts. A lot of hip-hop records have sections with live drums and sequenced drums playing off each other. There's a completely different tension in the rhythm when you have the live kit rolling, then all of a sudden it breaks into this metronomic sequenced part, then—*bang*—here comes the live kit again. I find that really exciting.

TS: After having mastered classical, jazz, rock, and fusion styles, what's next?

JH: People don't know what to make of me anymore. I get calls from people in Czechoslovakia asking when I'm going to go there to play a concert. I keep thinking, "What would they expect from me?"

TS: Eastern Europeans probably haven't had access to what you've been doing over the past twenty years.

JH: Right, and it makes it difficult for me to seriously consider going out to play live. Now, the music that I have the most fun playing is progressive instrumental rock/pop music, and that's it. [laughs]

TS: Does that stem from the fact that you are self-contained, working in your home studio without the need to recruit other musicians to play with you?

JH: I think it comes from making music for movies. In a studio you can create this ideal version of what you have in your mind. It's sort of like making a movie, where you take lots of elements and arrange them, polish them, and then reorganize them until things really click. On stage, you just roll the dice and hope for the best—which is great. But I would have to say that my favorite mode of expression is in the studio.

TS: Do you ever get the urge to bring out the kit and play instead of program?

JH: It depends on the project. I certainly do like to use a kit for a record. That's a long-term project. When I work on a television series or a movie—things that happen very quickly—I don't have the luxury to be setting up mic's and getting the sounds. I can just program on the Macintosh and—*bang*—there it is. I get great sounds—which happen to be samples of my drums. So under that sort of schedule, it doesn't make sense to play a kit. I do sit down and play drums for fun, though. I enjoy that a lot.

TS: I understand that your little boy also plays.

JH: Oh yeah. He's seven years old and just starting. I asked him if he wanted to play the piano and he said, "No, I'm a drummer, and I just want to play the drums."

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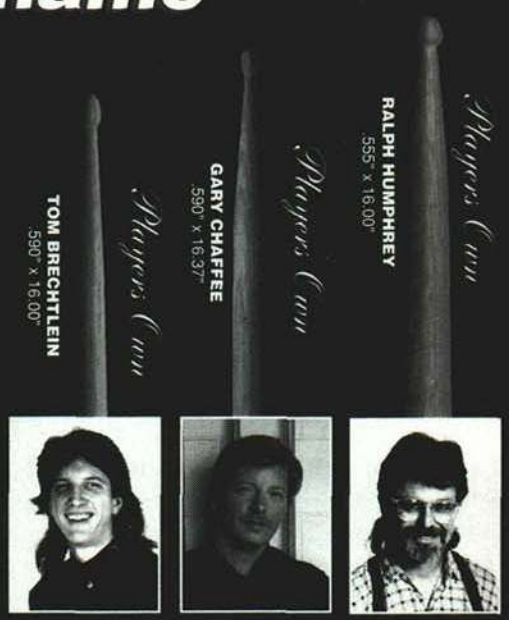

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The Practice Room Monster

by Phil Ferraro

In my quest for knowledge and proficiency in percussion, I've encountered my share of puzzling situations that seemed to defy the established order of logic and reason—and *none* was as intriguing as the phenomenon of the Practice Room Monster (PRM).

In short, the Practice Room Monster is one who displays a high degree of ability within the practice environment, but fails to achieve that same level of musicianship in actual performance situations. The sole *reason* for practice is to advance our technical abilities and musicality for performance. When practice is an end unto itself, and doesn't transfer benefits to the bandstand, its whole purpose is defeated.

My first encounter with a PRM was as a novice musician in junior high school band. A fellow drummer was constantly impressing me during practice with his superior reading ability and rudimental knowledge. Sadly, when the time came for our concert performances, he never played anywhere *near* his potential.

Years later, while serving in the Army band, I again ran into a gifted drummer who exhibited outstanding technical abilities. He pushed himself through the most rigorous practice routine I had ever seen, extending at times into the wee hours of the morning. Yet again, I saw the Spector of the PRM rear its ugly head. When performance time arrived, this individual was a different player, lacking the excellence strived for in the practice room. *"Why?",* I asked myself. "The more you practice, the better you become" is what I'd been taught in all my years of study. It would be years later before an epiphany to this perplexing paradox would occur. But first, I'd have to experience my own personal encounter with the enigma to learn the answer.

After the service, I headed off for college with hopes of furthering my musical experience. I maintained a regular practice schedule, and stayed in the area during semester breaks. These hiatuses afforded me the opportunity to give my drum studies unlimited attention. I went at it full speed ahead, pushing myself eight to twelve hours a day, five to six days a week. After about a month of this, I began feeling frustrated. I wasn't making progress at the rate I'd hoped for. The new material I was practicing wasn't making that all-important transition to the practical bag of tricks used on stage. To boot, my established technique seemed to be stagnating and was ineffectual when performing. In desperation, I decided to *redouble* my efforts to break through the wall of frustration.

> "When practice is an end unto itself, and doesn't transfer benefits to the bandstand, its whole purpose is defeated."

I searched through every music publication for information. I reread notes from former teachers and reviewed my texts from the Armed Forces School of Music. Again, my best efforts were thwarted. I was going nowhere fast. What was I to do? Was this a permanent condition I would have to resign myself to? Had I become a Practice Room Monster?

Weeks later, I put the drums on the back burner to address the academic responsibilities of the new semester. A month had passed without my touching the instrument. The first jazz band rehearsal was scheduled, and I showed up expecting the worst. We kicked into the first chart, and as I started to play, a funny thing happened. The concepts that I had so diligently struggled with months before suddenly became clear and sprang forth into fruition. The *ideas* were there. The *chops* were there. I was giddy with excitement and extremely thankful.

For the remainder of the school year, I pondered over being spared the fate of becoming a PRM. After much reflection upon the cause and effect of this malady, I hit upon some useful insights. Years later, I would use these in my own teaching practice in an effort to help students encountering similar trials. I hope they can be of help to you, as well.

Build A Foundation: Many self-taught drummers who are serious about practicing may not know what to be serious *about.* Placing themselves on a self-prescribed practice regimen can sometimes lead to frustration. Though they may achieve a degree of prowess, nagging technical deficiencies hamper progress and kill enthusiasm. The solution is to seek out a competent teacher to get your musical foundation established. A good teacher is your most valuable resource to getting off on the right foot. A teacher can answer any questions you may have, and help you avoid bad habits or potential problems.

Practice For The Gig: Remember that the whole purpose of practice is to make you a better musician. Be sure that what you're working on is applicable to the performance situation you're involved in. That does *not* mean foregoing other styles of music. Just keep in mind what your "bread and butter" is, and make sure to devote enough time to achieve the level of proficiency needed to meet the gig. You'd be amazed at how many drummers *don't* have a practical focus on their practice routine.

Stop The Reruns: Have you ever noticed that when you get down to practice, you tend to gravitate towards material you *already* know? That's a prime trap PRM's fall into. They progress no further than their limited repertoire and technical abilities, simply because they practice the same things over and over. Sure it sounds great, but without stretching your abilities and increasing your knowledge, you're not going to mature as a player. Tackle that new and challenging material. Leave the reruns for TV

Sure And Steady: Diving head first into a rigorous session involving many hours per day may not be the best way to go. If you're comfortable with this arrangement, and have had success, by all means continue. But unfortunately, for many drummers, this leads to mental and physical fatigue, which then results in total cessation of progress and deterioration of existing skills. *Know your limitations!* If you experience pain or discomfort, lack of concentration, coordination dysfunction, or visual distortion, you may have hit your limit. Pushing yourself further would be fruitless, and only add to your anxiety. Once you've found your optimum practice time, set up a consistent daily routine. The *amount* of time you put in is not as important as the *regularity.* Ten hours evenly divided over the course of a week will do far more than cramming it all into one or two days. From your own experience of cramming for school tests, how much did you *really* learn and remember?

Consistent practice on a daily basis reinforces existing knowledge and skills, and transfers them from short-term to long-term memory. This is where all practical knowledge is stored. Slow down and take a measured pace, pursuing modest and achievable goals. Don't feel you must accomplish everything at once. Keep in mind that progress is measured in small increments, not in leaps and bounds.

Practice Smart: Studies have proven that there are two very distinct types of practice: *Massed Practice* is a repetitive form of drilling, which seems to work best for honing skills that involve psychomotor coordination. *Distributed Practice*—where the routine is broken down into separate short segments—seems best for facilitating mental concentration and knowledge retention. In simple terms, if you're in the process of learning a new skill, wish to critically evaluate existing skills for improvement and retention, or wish to try some ideas of your own based on your studies, *Distributed Practice* would seem best. If you already have a proper grasp of a new skill, and wish to work it up as part of your practical repertoire, then give *Massed Practice* a try.

Get Off The Pad: Practice pads are fine for repetitive exercises and when volume is a primary concern. Unfortunately, they do little to develop your listening skills. Since this is *so* important to your musical development and proficiency, whenever possible, do your best to practice on the genuine item.

Keep A Balanced Outlook: There's *more* to life than drums! To keep yourself emotionally sound and mentally sharp, you must relax, let off steam, and enjoy what life has to offer. A myopic view of life can only stifle your creative talents in the long run. Remember, every experience you have can be reflected in your music. Some have even claimed that music can mirror the soul, and that may be true. We all play our best when we're relaxed and happy. How happy can you be if *all* you do is struggle with complex ideas for umpteen hours a day, seven days a week, in a confined room? It's one thing to be dedicated, it's another to be *obsessed.* Get out and get a life!

Many great drummers had outside interests and hobbies. Gene Krupa was a baseball enthusiast. Buddy Rich was into the martial arts. Dave Tough was a great writer and an intellectual. The same can be said today of Neil Peart. Make your drumming a joy—not drudgery. Let your drums be the wings on which your dreams soar, and not the stone of frustration that drags your spirit down.

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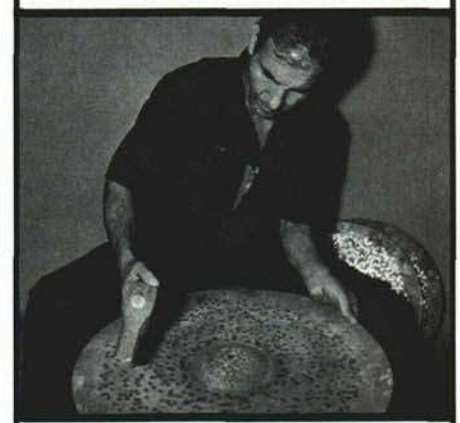

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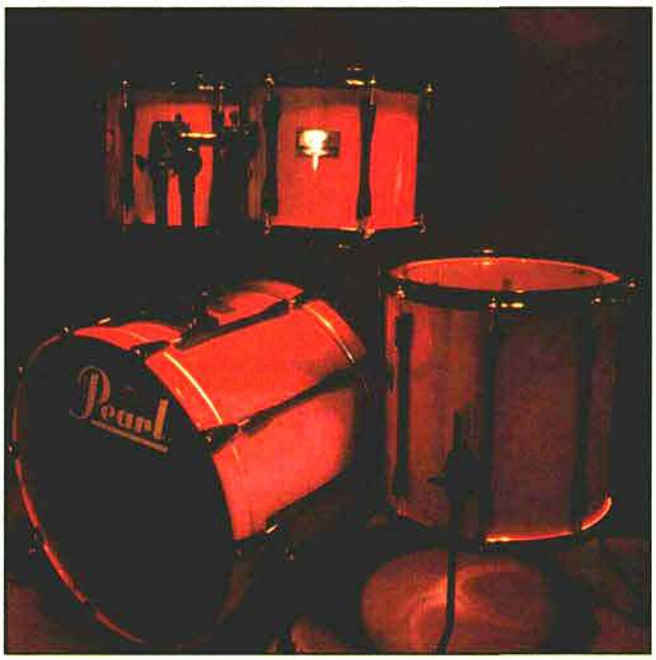
A Look At Colorlife

by Rick Van Horn



Thirty-six-year-old John Klados learned about industrial colorizing techniques while working for a company that colorized car and motorcycle parts. But John has been a drummer since the age of 13, and it wasn't long before he applied his colorizing skills to his drumset. Other drummers saw his kit, and asked him to color theirs. So it isn't surprising that when John opened his own colorizing business a few years ago, that business quickly began to focus on drum hardware and parts. Thus was born Colorlife.

RVH: What made you confident that there was going to be a market for colorized drum hardware?

JK: Drums have come a long way from the time that I started playing, with great stand designs and improvements in the drums themselves. But one thing that has remained the same is the chrome hardware. Now, chrome is great, but I just felt that colorizing the hardware would add another dimension. And I honestly believe that adding color to the hardware brings the drummer a lot more forward in the band—in terms of visibility. As a drummer myself, that's important; I'm sick and tired of drummers being buried in the back.

RVH: How is the hardware colorized?

JK: It's a powder coating process. We've also added a hardening material—not normally used in powder coating—that helps improve chip resistance. Wear and tear caused by breakdown and setup is what's hard on the finish, and most of that happens when a drummer throws his hardware in the case or bag.

RVH: What's the difference between "powder coating" and painting?

JK: Painting uses a liquid coloring material. We use an incredibly fine, dry powder. There are three types of powders: epoxies, TGIC polyesters, and hybrids. Some are more durable outdoors, some are better for indoor use. I have my personal choices for what drummers should use.

One of the reasons I like powder-coating over liquid painting is that- powder coating is 100% environmentally safe—if you have the proper equipment. For instance, our spraying booth takes the over-sprayed powder in, passes it through a number of chambered filters, and recycles it. Nothing goes out into the air at all. Powder coating is also easy to apply, yet it's 500% more durable than any liquid paint on the market today.

RVH: There are lots of industrial powder coaters and painters. Why is Colorlife the only one specializing in drum equipment?

JK: Every finisher specializes in his or her own particular niche. There may be other companies doing finishes like we do, but there's no way they're going to know drums like we do. Every one of the four guys who work for me is a drummer and has been on the road either as a player or as a drum tech. So they know the equipment. Plus we have a library of old spare-parts catalogs for reference—along with tons of spare parts.

Drum hardware and stands are unique compared to all other types of parts that have to be painted. It takes a lot more breakdown of each part, and it takes a lot more finesse in the painting in order to get the finish only where you want it. For instance, the various lengths of a cymbal stand have to slide into one another—sometimes with extremely fine tolerances. Those tolerances can be changed by adding the thickness of a colored finish. When you paint something like a roll cage on a hot rod, that kind of detail doesn't have to be taken into account. But with drums, everything has to remain 100% functional—especially the little things that people take for granted, such as memory locks. If I'm doing a two-color job—like a fluorescent color, which requires shooting in white and then shooting fluorescent over that—I'm probably adding close to 3 mils worth of colored material onto the stand. Most memory locks have to be muscled a little bit to get them to move around when the stand is chrome. Now / have to get them to work properly with the added finish. So we hone the inside of the memory lock to open up the hole a little bit and compensate for the difference. Then we mask the inside when the memory lock gets painted. In this way it'll still be functional.

We do a tremendous amount of masking. All threaded parts, such as tension rods, have to be masked. All the teeth and inside parts of cymbal tilters have to be masked, because if I

get color in there, they're not going to interlock and the cymbal will drop.

There's also a lot of disassembly involved in what we do. The intricacy of some drum hardware can boggle the mind—especially when you're dealing with hi-hats, snare strainers, and things like that. For instance, DW puts a plastic sleeve inside their hi-hats and cymbal stands to eliminate vibration and help make the parts slide more easily. That has to be taken out, because it would melt under the 400-degree heat I use to bake the finish on. To do that, we have to knock pieces out that normally you wouldn't think need to come out.

RVH: Not all drum hardware is made of the same material. Can you colorize all kinds of metal?

JK: Yes; it just takes a different type of technique for each one. With aluminum, for instance, there's a lot of gas in the metal, and when you put it in the oven the gas starts coming up and the surface starts bubbling. There are certain techniques involved to eliminate that so that the finish is hard and smooth and durable.

We can colorize anything that won't melt. For example, I do a lot of metal snare drum shells. I shoot clear finishes over brass for some manufacturers.

RVH: Does the powder coating affect the sound of the drum in anyway?

JK: Not really. Some of the companies prefer us to mask off the inside of the shell—where the sound is created—and just shoot the outside. That's what we do, and it keeps it true to the sound. An interesting thing happens when I shoot a cowbell, though. Inevitably, drummers will put tape around a cowbell—or shove a sock in it—to get that "clunk" sound. When I colorize a cowbell, it brings the sound right down to a great clunk—and the finish doesn't chip.

RVH: Can you color cymbals?

JK: I've done a couple of cymbals—translucent colors shot right over the bronze itself. But if we were to shoot in heavy or dark colors, I think the cymbal would lose its tone. I wouldn't *recommend* it, but I'll be more than happy to do it, if a customer wants it.

RVH: What happens when you get a drumkit to be colorized?

JK: First, we'll see if there are any pieces missing. When drummers send us kits they've had for a while, there will often be a washer missing by a spur, or something like that. We write everything down. From there, we totally break the kit down, as I mentioned earlier. We take all the chrome off—sandblasting down to the bare metal. Then we mask off and seal all the screw holes that we don't want to get the coating material in.

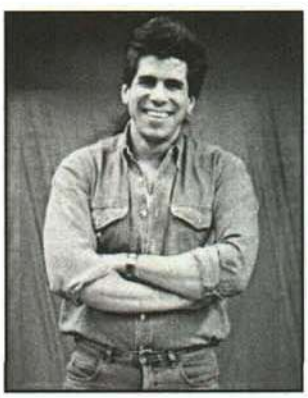
My shop foreman, John White—"Inspector 12," as he is affectionately known—inspects the kit when it comes in, inspects it after the sandblasting, inspects it after it gets masked off, inspects it after it gets hung on the racks, and inspects it again after it gets painted. Then he inspects it a final time after it gets bagged up, making sure everything is bagged and sealed correctly.

RVH: Do you prefer that drummers send complete kits or strip the hardware off of the drums themselves?

JK: I recommend that they send us just the hardware simply because it will be cheaper to ship. But they can send the complete drums; there's no additional charge for us to take the hardware off. I wouldn't particularly trust commercial shippers with delicate drum shells, but that's up to the individual. We'll handle it either way.

RVH: Do you colorize every single metal part on a kit?

JK: We don't touch the tension rods on the toms or the snare, because you want the drumkey to fit on them properly. We also leave the swivel nuts in the tension lugs alone. It looks nicer that way, anyway. That little bit of chrome breaks out of the color scheme, and keeps everything from looking flat. But we do color T-rods, claws, spurs, and everything else—unless, of



Colorlife president John Klados

Drum rims are sprayed with "fluidized" powder.

Shop foreman John White ("Inspector 12") removes a rack of colorized rims from the oven, where the color has been baked on at 400°.

course, the customer requests that we leave some parts alone.

RVH: What types and colors of finishes are available?

JK: We have standard colors, like black, yellow, red, green—the whole spectrum. We have candy-apple finishes, which are translucent colors over a silver or gold base. We can shoot color over chrome, which produces a very pretty finish. We have fluorescent colors that glow under a black light, and colors that have metal flakes in them—like a lot of drum companies have on their shells. And there are pearl iridescent finishes: If you look at them at a certain angle they'll be one color, if you look at them at another angle they'll be a totally different color.

Drummers don't realize the extent of colors that are available to make a kit look unique. As a result, four out of five phone calls I get for colored hardware will ask for black. When I speak to drummers, I always ask, "What color is your kit? What kind of music do you play?" I try to get to know the individual and the direction that his music is into. If he's a heavy-metal, thrash type of guy I might suggest a hammer tone or gun-metal gray—because that's the heavy-metal type of image. If the drummer's more into glam-rock, then I suggest fluorescent or candy colors. Of course, the bottom line is that the customer has to be happy. And if black is his or her choice, that's fine too. You can't go wrong with basic black.

RVH: What if a drummer wants to add additional pieces? Can you match something you colored a year earlier?

JK: Absolutely. Matching colors is never a problem.

RVH: How is the coating actually done?

JK: Before we can spray the powder onto the parts, it has to be "fluidized." We put the powder into a special container, and a computer-controlled pump passes air into it. The air separates each grain of powder and puts it into a "fluid" state so it can be sprayed efficiently.

The particles receive an electrical charge as they come out of the sprayer, and the rack that we hang the parts on for spraying is grounded. This creates a "static cling" effect. I can literally shoot the parts and put them aside for three hours—and the powder won't fall off. I *don't* do that, though, because dust may fall on the sprayed parts.

We use different methods of shooting powder onto different parts. I shoot the lugs and the rims a certain way to add a little more thickness. It's especially important on the rims, because they take a lot of abuse. I don't spray cymbal arms and other stand parts as heavily, because I have to keep all the mechanisms working.

As soon as we finish spraying the parts, we put them into our oven, where we bake the finish on for anywhere from eight to twelve minutes. The powder melts to an even consistency, and when it comes out it's already dry—but very hot. We let it cool down for about five minutes, and the finishing is done. No polishing is required, because with gloss powder finishes, the gloss is 95% there. I do recommend, though, that drummers use a regular car wax on their hardware from time to time—mainly for protection, and to preserve the shine.

Once the parts are coated, we reassemble all the drums and stands, and return them to the customer. We know that drummers can't be without their drums for long, so turnaround time is a major consideration. We've got it down to about ten days from the time we receive the drums to the time the customer gets them back.

RVH: For a very new company, you have a substantial number of big-name endorsers. Isn't that an expensive way to promote your service?

JK: To a certain extent. But, as any other drum company will tell you, it helps bring in the everyday drummer. And there's nothing more exciting to me than turning on the TV and seeing one of my endorsers playing. Tito Puente was on *Late Night With David Letterman* recently, and they started off with a close-up of a timbale that we did—with our logo right there. Do you know how many phone calls we got after that?

RVH: But is your service affordable for the "everyday" drummer?

JK: It's a lot more affordable than people realize. I try to do everything from a drummer's perspective, because I'm out there playing, myself. For example, there are over 1,500 different colors available to powder coaters. I know from past experience what colors to avoid, and what colors to really go for. Top-name arena drummers have techs who pack everything in individual cases. Those drummers can go for the most elegant colors and it won't matter. But when everyday players shell out hard-earned cash on a set, they don't want the finish to start chipping. We're confident enough in our finishes that if there's ever a problem, we'll touch it up free of charge.

I know that working drummers aren't rich, and I also know that the service we offer is not a necessity. With all that in mind, we keep the price low on the drum end of our business so that we can make it affordable to all drummers. We make it up on items other than drums: motorcycle and go-cart parts, outdoor furniture, bird cages, etc. They're profitable—but not nearly as much fun!

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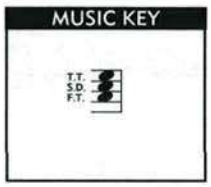
Cross-Sticking: Part 1

by Ron Spagnardi

MUSIC KEY



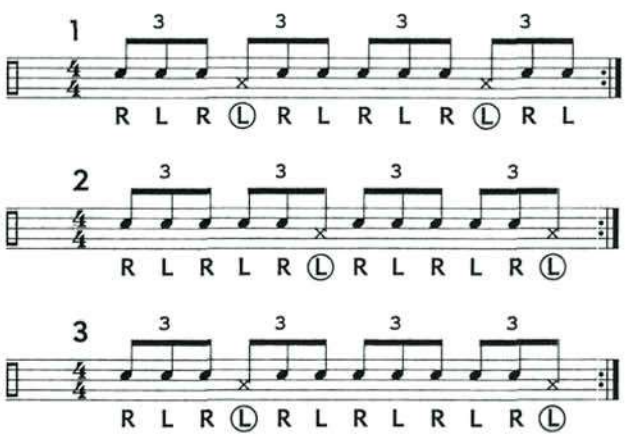
The technique of moving around the drumset with cross-sticking is used primarily for visual effect during solos. It's also a technique that *does* present a host of special problems that need to be worked out during practice sessions. This two-part article is designed to help you develop the facility needed to master the technique.

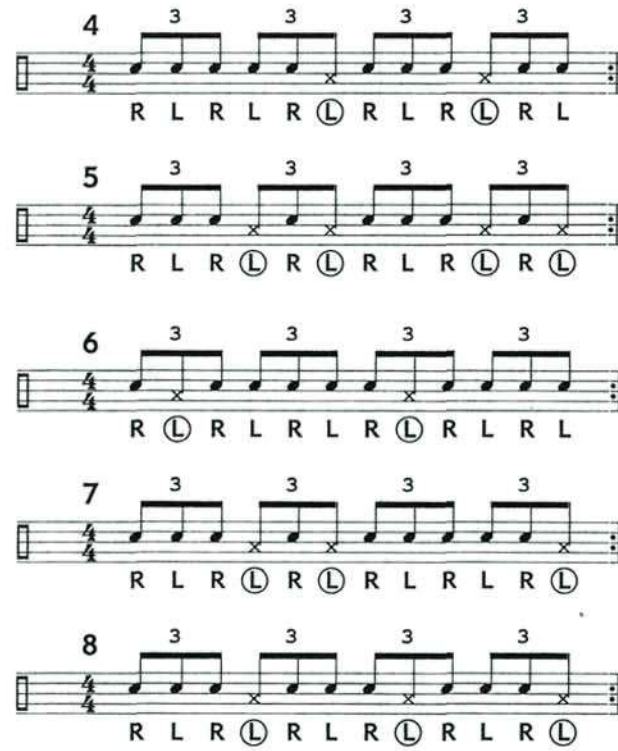
Though cross-sticking works well in 8th- and 16th-note formats—and with double sticking or paradiddles—we'll limit our discussion to cross-sticking that utilizes single-sticking in an 8th-note triplet framework.

In all of the exercises below, cross-sticking from one drum to another is marked by an x and a circle around the hand making the cross-over. Note that Part 1 of this series uses only left-over-right cross-stickings. Also, be aware that in most cases the cross-over works well when the left hand crosses *over* the right. Other times, the left hand crossing *under* the right will be less awkward and easier to execute. That's your decision, though we do recommend trying both methods and staying with the one that works the best for you. You can also use a combination of over and under crosses within the same measure.

Though not notated, all patterns should be played with the bass drum on 1, 2, 3, and 4. Finally, remember that the 32 examples that follow just scratch the surface. There are hundreds of other combinations of cross-sticking, so feel free to experiment once you've become comfortable with the technique. Also, be sure to start slowly at first, gradually building each pattern up to top speed. We'll begin by exploring the most basic of cross-sticking techniques:

Snare Drum To Floor Tom With Left Hand Cross-Sticking





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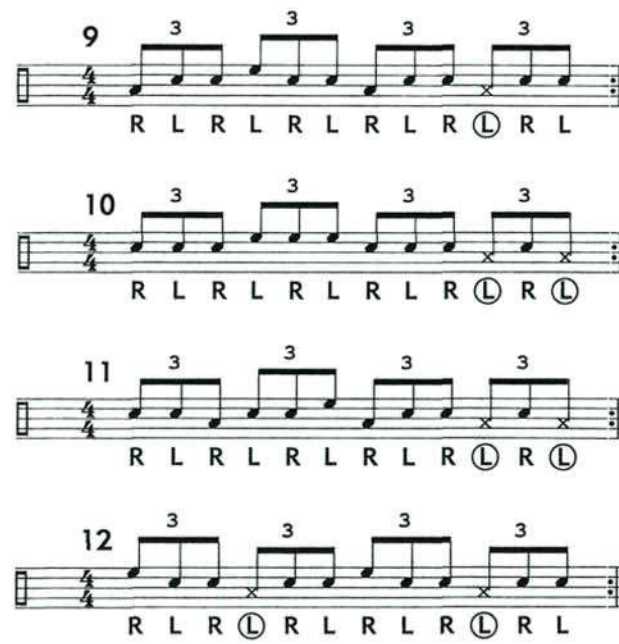
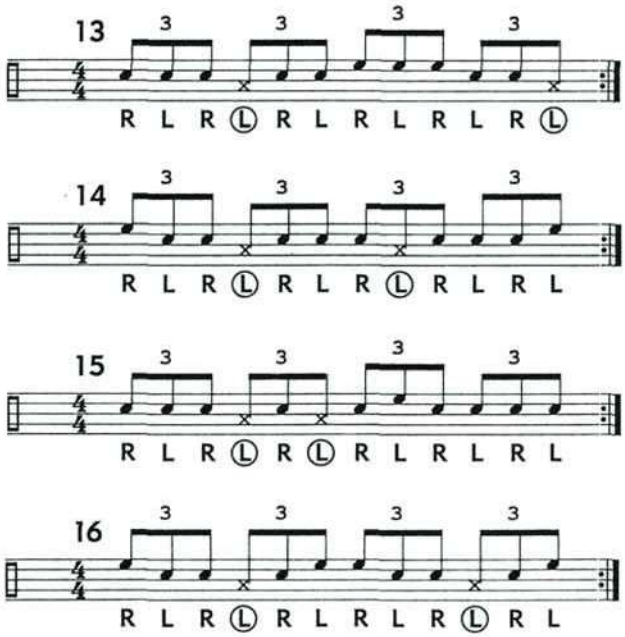
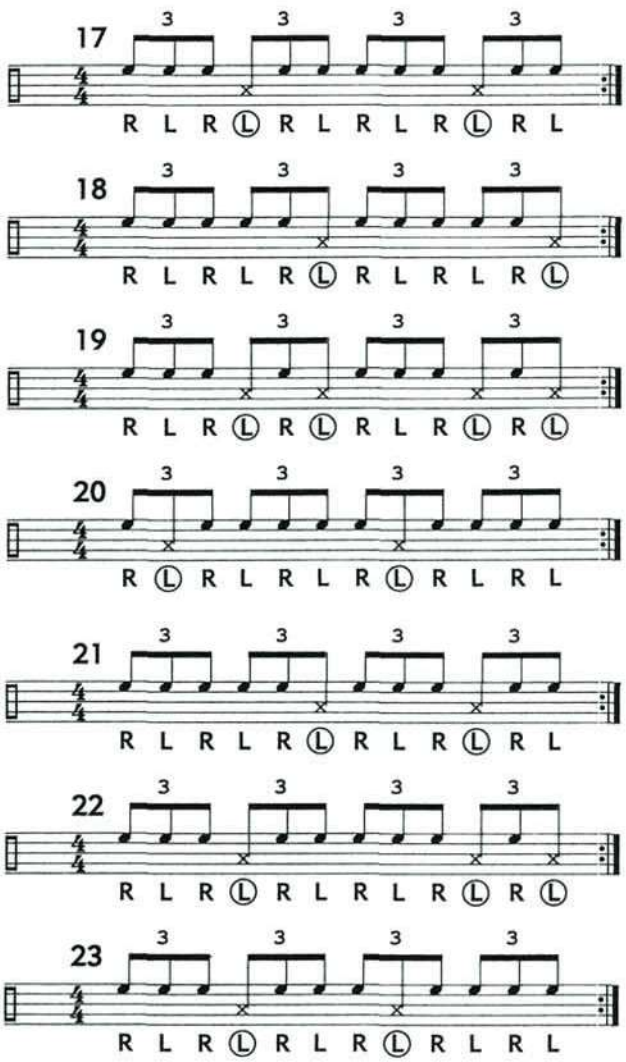
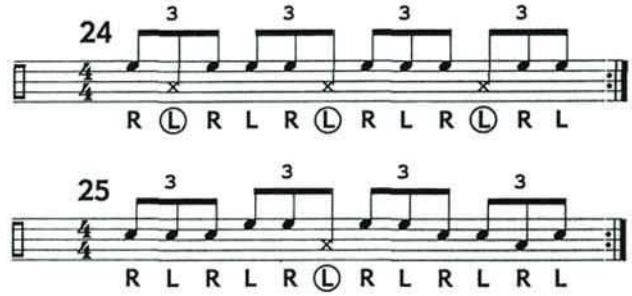
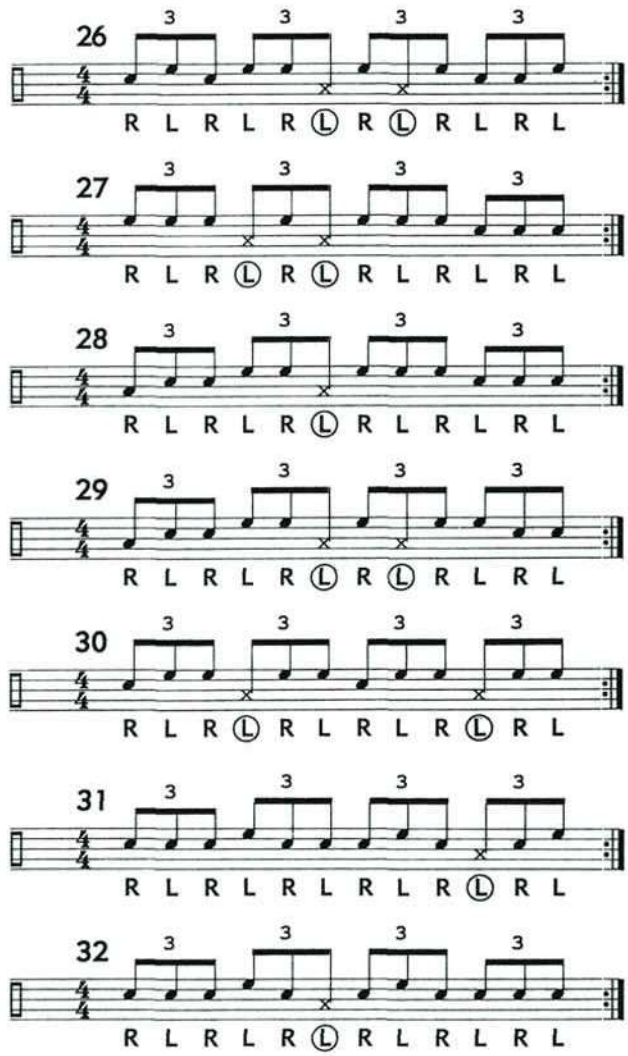



Small Tom-Tom To Floor Tom With Left Hand Cross-Sticking





Adding The Snare Drum



Next month we'll look at drum-to-drum cross-sticking patterns that utilize right hand over left hand, along with various combination exercises that use all of the cross-sticking patterns we've covered.

Portions of this material excerpted from Cross-Sticking Around The Drums *by Ron Spagnardi, Published by JR Publications, New York.*

Zen & The Art Of Drumming

by Spiros A. Psarris

Has this ever happened to you? You're playing a set with your band, and you're feeling a little bored. Your playing is okay, but you feel as though you're on automatic pilot. Gradually, you notice that your hands and feet seem to be playing by themselves. You're no longer *trying* to play. Your hands and feet are doing things that you don't seem to be controlling. You wonder what would happen if you tried to stop playing and couldn't!

How about this? You're practicing a coordination exercise—something difficult, like a David Garibaldi lesson—and you notice that if you detach yourself from your playing, each limb can play independently. But as soon as your brain interferes with the process, trying to control your limbs, the whole thing falls apart. Sound familiar?

Most of us have had things like this happen. The first example can be a little scary if you're not used to it. The second can be frustrating if you don't understand it. Let's look at why these things happen, by comparing drumming to some ancient Oriental arts that work the same way.

We'll start by discussing one of these arts—Zen. Many people have heard of Zen, but few know what it is. Zen is a Buddhist religion centered in Asia. It's been around for thousands of years, but our culture has been introduced to it only recently. Zen masters can do all sorts of strange things, like control their heart rates, or shoot a bow-and-arrow blindfolded better than Robin Hood. Zen can improve any performance skill, and we can use its techniques to help our drumming.

How Does Zen Work?

If we look at methods of teaching Zen, for example in Japan, we'd see that most students learn it through another art. The Japanese use tea ceremonies, archery, martial arts, and swordsmanship to learn Zen, but they all have one thing in common. To learn them, the student must learn elaborate rituals with complex movements, including a certain method of breathing. Although these skills are difficult to learn at first, the student practices them endlessly. Eventually, they become second nature, and the student can perform them without thinking. This is the key to the whole thing. The purpose of the rituals is to detach your mind from the workings of hand and body.

Think about drumming for a minute. It requires coordination and physical skills that take a long time to master. However, once learned, your drumming can become automatic in a soothing sort of way. How many times have you been playing and suddenly "woke up" realizing that your mind was somewhere far away, but you had continued playing anyway? In many ways, drumming is better than the traditional Zen arts. Music is very primitive and emotional, and playing a strong, simple beat bypasses your mind altogether and brings out a "mindless" state automatically.

"Zen can improve any performance skill, and we can use its techniques to help our drumming."

If you've experienced the second example from the beginning of this article, you already know that the mindless state is very important to getting the best performance. Now we'll use some Zen techniques to achieve the mindless state while we play. The most important thing to learn is proper breathing. When you learn to breathe properly, the mindless state happens almost by itself.

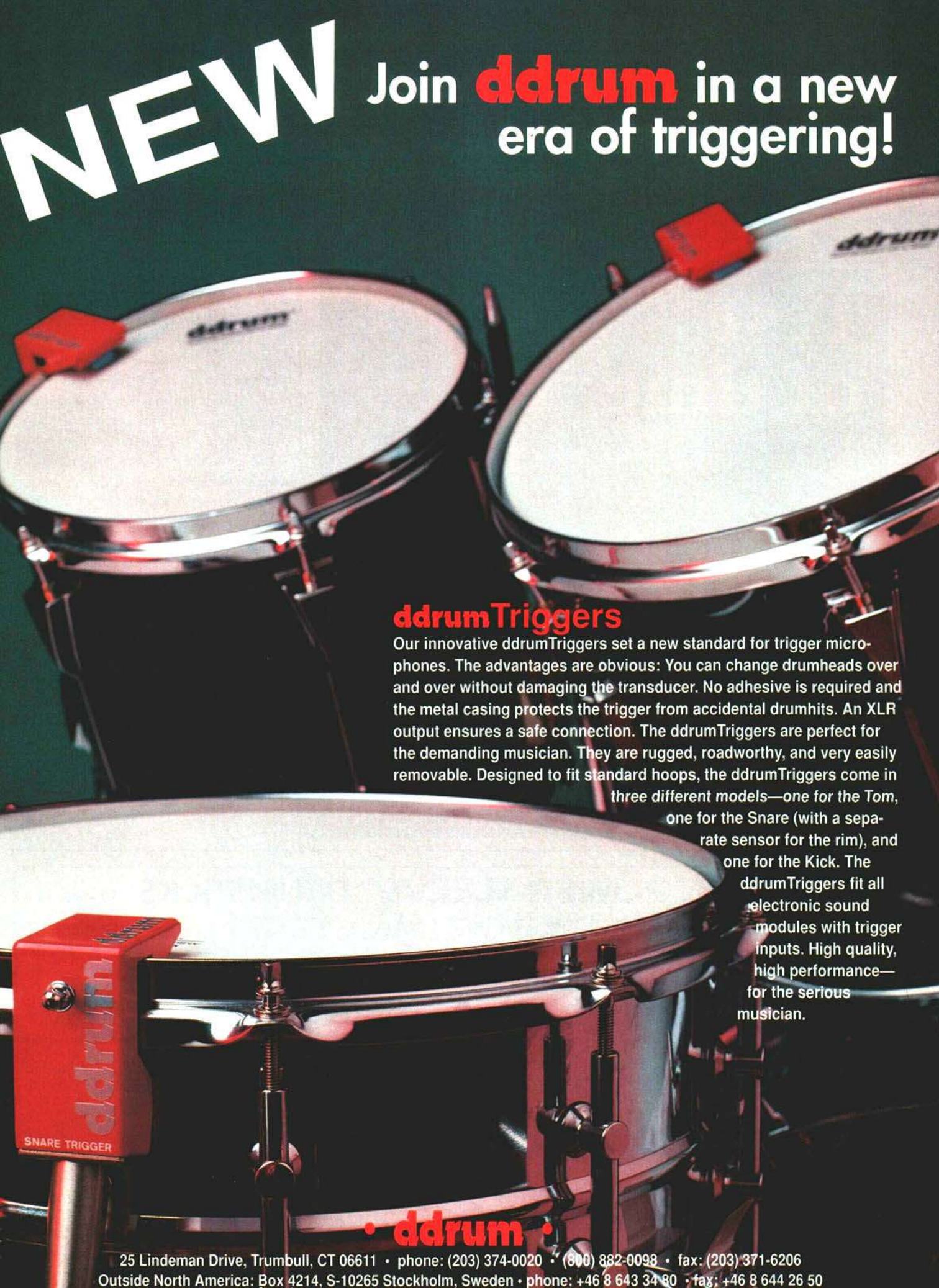
Using The Techniques

All the Far Eastern disciplines (Zen, yoga, Taoism) stress the importance of proper breathing. Most of us have been taught that "suck your belly in, stick your chest out" is good posture, but it's *not.* Proper breathing comes from your stomach, the center of your body's energy. Pulling your stomach in forces you to expand your chest to breathe, which wastes energy.

Sit on your drum stool for this exercise. First, notice your posture. Is your back straight? Are you slumped over? Slumping puts pressure on your chest cavity and interferes with breathing. However, sitting straight *doesn't* mean pulling your shoulders back until they touch, either. Sit with your back straight, but be relaxed, too.

Next look at your legs. Is your stool so high that you have to balance yourself with your legs? Is it so low that you can't get good leverage on the bass drum pedal? To keep yourself balanced, your upper legs should be more or less parallel to the floor.

As you're sitting there, relax (without slumping over). Notice how you're breathing—from your stomach. However, your breaths are probably too shallow. Take a deep breath. Your stomach should feel like you're inflating a basketball. Hold it for a second or two by pressing down with your stomach muscles, and then let it out slowly. Breath in again. Practice this for a while until it feels more natural. You'll probably get a little dizzy at first, but this will pass once you get used to it. You'll also probably notice that after some practice, you'll feel more solid, or centered in yourself somehow. This is the beginning stage of learning to concentrate your energies properly. When you get really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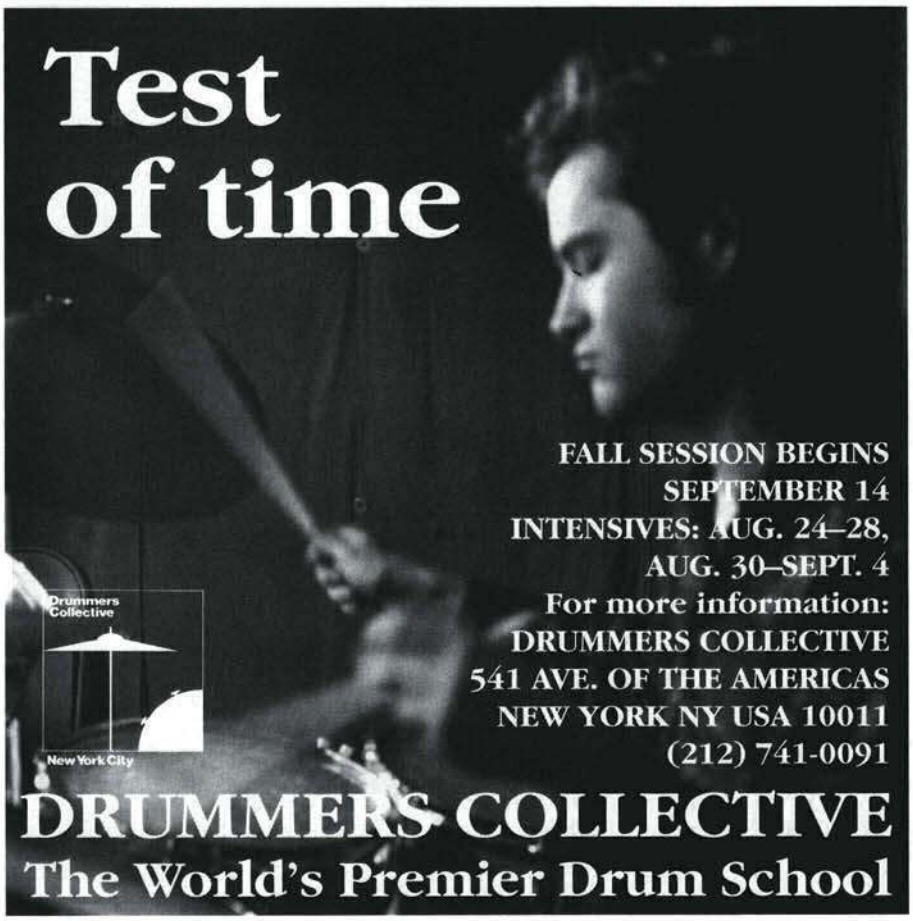
good at it (it takes a lot of practice), it will become automatic, and you'll feel like your body is breathing *you,* instead of the other way around.

Next, practice playing and breathing simultaneously. Play a simple rhythm while concentrating on your breathing. This exercise has two purposes: promoting more efficient breathing, and shifting your playing into a mindless mode. Practice different rhythms while doing this.

Once you get good at this, you'll find it easy to detach yourself from your playing and concentrate on your breathing. The hard part comes when you practice at different tempos. Our natural breathing rhythm tends to dominate our playing, and so you'll have to work a little harder to get the proper time. Don't be afraid to slightly speed up or slow down your breathing if that's necessary, but keep breathing correctly. Also, if you play hard rock or other energetic music, your breathing will of course be a little different than when you're completely relaxed. Experiment to see what works best.

One last word on playing mindlessly. Don't lose yourself in the music so deeply that you miss cues or required fills. You have to leave a little piece of yourself in this world to know what's going on in the music.

How will all of this help your drumming? Once you get good at mindlessness, you'll find that your timekeeping will improve because you're more centered in yourself. Plus, four-way coordination becomes easier when you can call up the mindless state whenever you want. Practice these techniques until you feel comfortable with them, and enjoy yourself!



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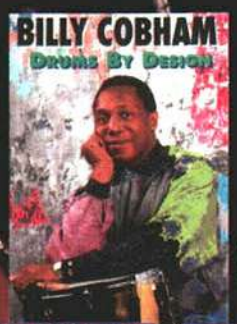

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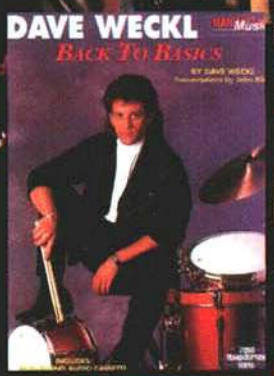

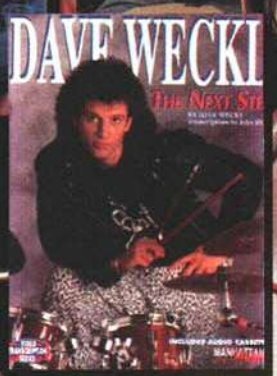

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DCI MUSIC VIDEO

continued from page 27

ming comes from guys like Ringo and Gene Krupa—the guys who created the stuff.

"There were so many guys when I was little," Curry reminisces. "Danny Seraphine was it! I hear Chicago stuff on the radio and I still melt. He's such a great drummer. He was probably my biggest influence as a kid. I tried so hard to learn the first couple of Chicago records—all the little filler things he did. On the second album, one whole side is just a bunch of songs strung together, like one piece of music, and man, the stuff he did in between the tracks to segue the songs was killer. And every fill and every note and the sound he got.... I would just wait until the next Chicago album came out. Bobby Colomby was a big influence on me as well. I got to meet him when I worked with Rodney Crowell, and he's such a cool guy."

Mickey says that as he became more aware of the drummers on records, session guys became his idols. "My heroes became Jim Gordon, Jim Keltner, Jeff Porcaro, Bernard Purdie.... Once I started playing on lots of different records, I started listening more to what they were doing. I was really into it and sort of into trying to follow this path of my heroes. So now I just go in and try to be like all my heroes wrapped up in one. John Bonham, Ginger Baker, Gerry Conway, who played on some of Cat Stevens' records—there's one song called 'Bitter Blue' on the *Teaser And The Firecat* record. Check out that drum track. Then I found out from Richard Thompson that Gerry was playing live with him for a long time. I was doing the records and going, 'What am I doing here? Why don't you have Gerry Conway playing on your records?' Then there was Barry Morgan on Elton John's 'Burn Down The Mission.' Those are some great players.

"The kind of sessions I like are when people tell me to play whatever I think is right, and I play it and listen back, and it's really right. It works, it sounds good, and it's confident. It's when things just come out the way they should. The part is right, the sound is right, all the fills are good, and everything works for the song and the singer. You can do it in a couple of takes. When everybody is con-

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fident, happy, up, and positive, that's really a great feeling. I've made it a point to stay as positive about things as I can, because when things start getting heavy, you just want to shut down and go home. You have to keep things up and fun. I know that sounds kind of 'boy scout,' but it's true."

Curry says that he always strives to give a producer exactly what he requests. "There are ways to play drum tracks where you can play the perfect track for the producer and the artist and still have your own little thing in there. If I drastically disagree with a producer, where I might want to play brushes or just do a snare drum track, then it's usually trial and error. I say something if I really think I have an idea that might work. But I'm really lucky, because most people say, 'Just do what you think is right, and if it's not what we want, we'll say something.' I do whatever I feel like doing on the initial run-through, and then it's always open for discussion. I'm not the kind of guy who usually takes criticism personally or gets upset because they don't want me to play something I think is interesting. It's okay with me. I find the easiest working situation for me is going in and having a producer say, 'We hired you because we like the way you play, and we want you to do what you do.' That happens most of the time, though there are those sessions were they go, *'This* is what we want, and *this* is what has to be done.' Even that kind of situation, though, is a challenge and worthy of attack."

When asked why he thinks he became such an in-demand session drummer, Curry has to think hard to answer. Finally it comes to what he's been intimating all along—that he gets along well with people. "I really think that's 90% of it," Mickey says. "You have to be able to play, though. You can't go in and be a nice guy but a mediocre drummer. I don't think my strengths necessarily lie in my drumming, though. I think they lie more in my getting along with people and trying to give them what they need to have.

"I do have good time," Mickey finally concedes, then reconsiders. "Well, it's *not great,* but it's decent. And I can play to a click track."

Of his early days with the click, Mickey recalls, "I was really inexperienced in the

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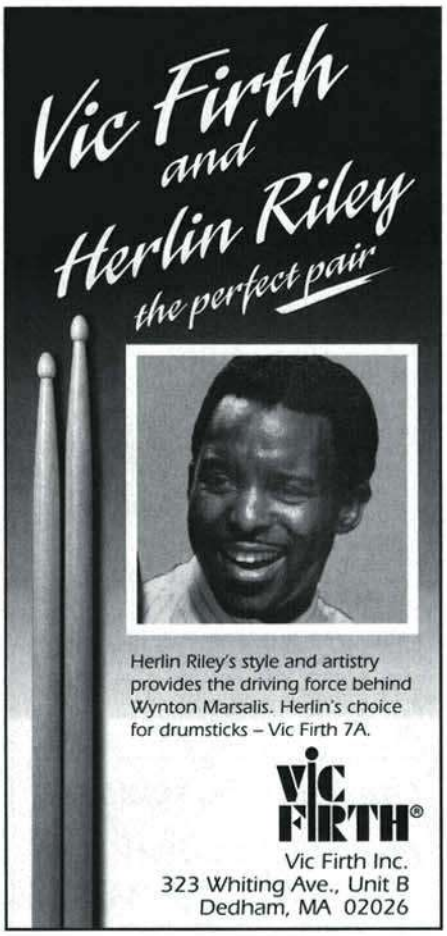

studio, so it was difficult. I felt like the click track was hindering my ability. I couldn't play a cool fill because I wouldn't come out in time. But the more I worked with the click, the less I looked at it as a time thing—I began to deal with it as another instrument or sound. You get to the point where you hardly even hear it. Now you can have musical click tracks, so it's almost like playing to a sequenced part, and that's really easy to do.

"Now I *prefer* having a click track so I know that the time is not wavering. You can also play around the click. You can make a song kind of sit and groove a little bit by playing just behind it a bit. Or maybe, if a song has got to be up, you can get in front of it a little. You can play with it and use it. That's something I think I've gotten better at.

"I remember doing a Hall & Oates session where I had the click track so loud that it actually hurt my hearing," Curry recalls. "It was on the song 'Adult Education.' We had the drums really big in the headphone mix to get that effect. [Producer] Bob Clearmountain said, 'I want to do something really drastic; the drums are going to be really big, so they'll be really loud. Play them accordingly.' I couldn't hear the click track, so I kept having them turn it up. A lot of stuff was programmed to the click already because the drums were put on after, so I had to have the click track really loud, and it hurt my ears. That was a tough lesson to learn."

While he had great difficulty coming up with a list of his strengths, Curry, like most, readily spouts what he perceives to be his weaknesses. "I would love to have better chops, like Dave Weckl chops—complete facility with the drumkit—but I don't. I'm very limited as far as technique." Is that really required for what Curry does, though? "I don't know," he answers. "I'm just saying that if I had my choice, I'd like to wake up tomorrow with those chops.

"I don't want to have to spend ten hours a day working on it, though," Mickey laughs. "It would just satisfy me knowing that I had them. You get into certain situations where you cut the tracks, but you know if you were a little bit more well-versed with the drumkit, you could probably come up with something real cool. You're never really satisfied with

what you've done, and you always think, 'Gee, if I only worked on this thing a little more, I could have probably done something better than what I did—which happens on most projects I do.

"I always hear the weak spot or where I was in doubt," Curry continues. "I'll hear a song on the radio, and it'll come to the bridge and I'll go, 'I wish I had changed that.' You hear that couple of bars where maybe the hi-hat goes just a little off. But nobody else would ever hear it. And, of course, you're not making a record for yourself; you're making it for someone else. If it's okay with them, then it's got to be okay for you.

"As far as weaknesses, I don't take a lot of chances when I play. I don't go for the cool fills or the technically proficient thing, because I'm afraid I'll screw it up or that it won't work," he admits. "So I have a tendency to do what I know will work. Then again, it all depends on who I'm working with. Some guys really push me to go for it, and they want me right at the edge."

Curry says that Bryan Adams definitely pushes him to that edge. "He wants the absolute best that I can give him. When I finish a project with Bryan, I'm amazed at some of the things he's pulled out of me. He gets me to play things that I really don't believe I can do. I listen back and think, 'Wow, I did that?' He knows how far he can take it."

Mickey says that his favorite recorded work with Adams (or anybody else, for that matter) is probably the 1987 album *Into The Fire*. "I think I just played better on it," he explains. "I think the songs were more geared toward how I like to sound on record. We recorded it at Bryan's house, with the drums in the dining room. Bob Clearmountain was engineering. Bryan had just had a studio put in, and it was like everyone had new toys. It was a whole new environment, so the ideas were fresh and the playing was fresh. There was a lot of energy, and it all worked toward a really good performance record."

Mickey explains that the record was cut live with the guitar, bass, and keyboards in the living room. "I was in the dining room, and there was a big French door between me and the living room, so we were all visible to one another. Bob was downstairs in the basement, which was

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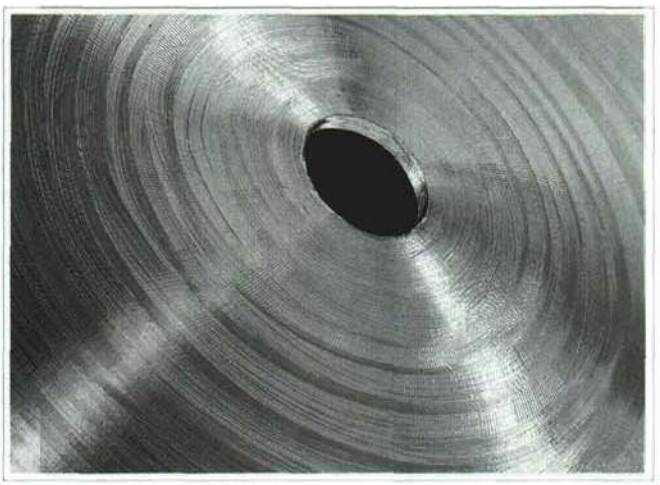

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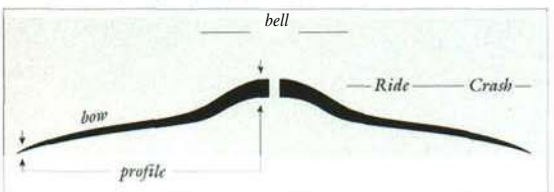

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the control room, but we had video cameras with a screen so we could see each other.

"There's a song on that album called 'Victim Of Love,' which is a really good drum track," Curry says. "We pieced together the end of it because they wanted all these big drum fills for the fade. Instead of me just going in and playing a million different fades, we did a bunch of different drum fills and slotted them in. I listened to it all pieced together, and then I went back through and we kind of patched it all up. So the end of it is just a hodgepodge of drum fills and edits. I'm used to just going in and playing a track from start to finish and then fixing up the spots that are wrong. But on this track, we did it from start to finish and then came up with that idea."

One fact Mickey wants people to understand is that he didn't actually *play* on Bryan's *Waking Up The Neighbors* album. "Mutt Lange did all the programming," Mickey says, "though much of the stuff came from my original ideas. A lot of the parts were played and then put into the synth. The only *physical* thing I did was doubling all the cymbal tracks, because the machine just sounded like shit."

With his vast studio experience, what tracks would Mickey say best represent his playing? "Probably some of the Richard Thompson stuff, although I can't remember specific tracks. I felt that the song 'Fire Woman' from the Cult's *Sonic Temple* record was a good drum track. It was real simple, and it was one of those driving tracks—a real straight-ahead, kick/snare kind of thing. It's a Motown kind of drum track, and it grooves really well. That was a first take. A lot of the tracks I play that seem to work well are usually the first takes. The song 'Somebody' was one take as well. 'It's Only Love,' the Bryan Adams duet with Tina Turner, was also one take.

"There's also a track on the Alice Cooper record called 'Wind Up Toy' that I thought was a good track," Curry continues. "We had all these ideas for sound effects and things, and the song became more of a visual thing as opposed to just a song. The lyrics were about a little kid having a nightmare and not being able to go to sleep because he thought things were under the bed and in the closet. We all had that in mind when we played the track, and it all came out sounding great."

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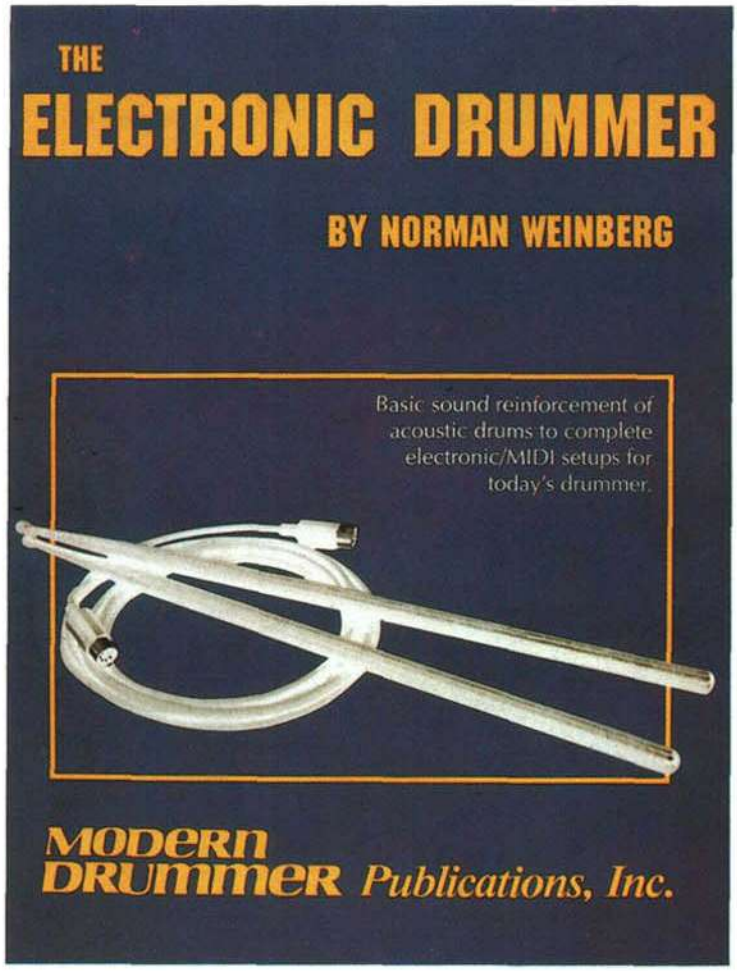

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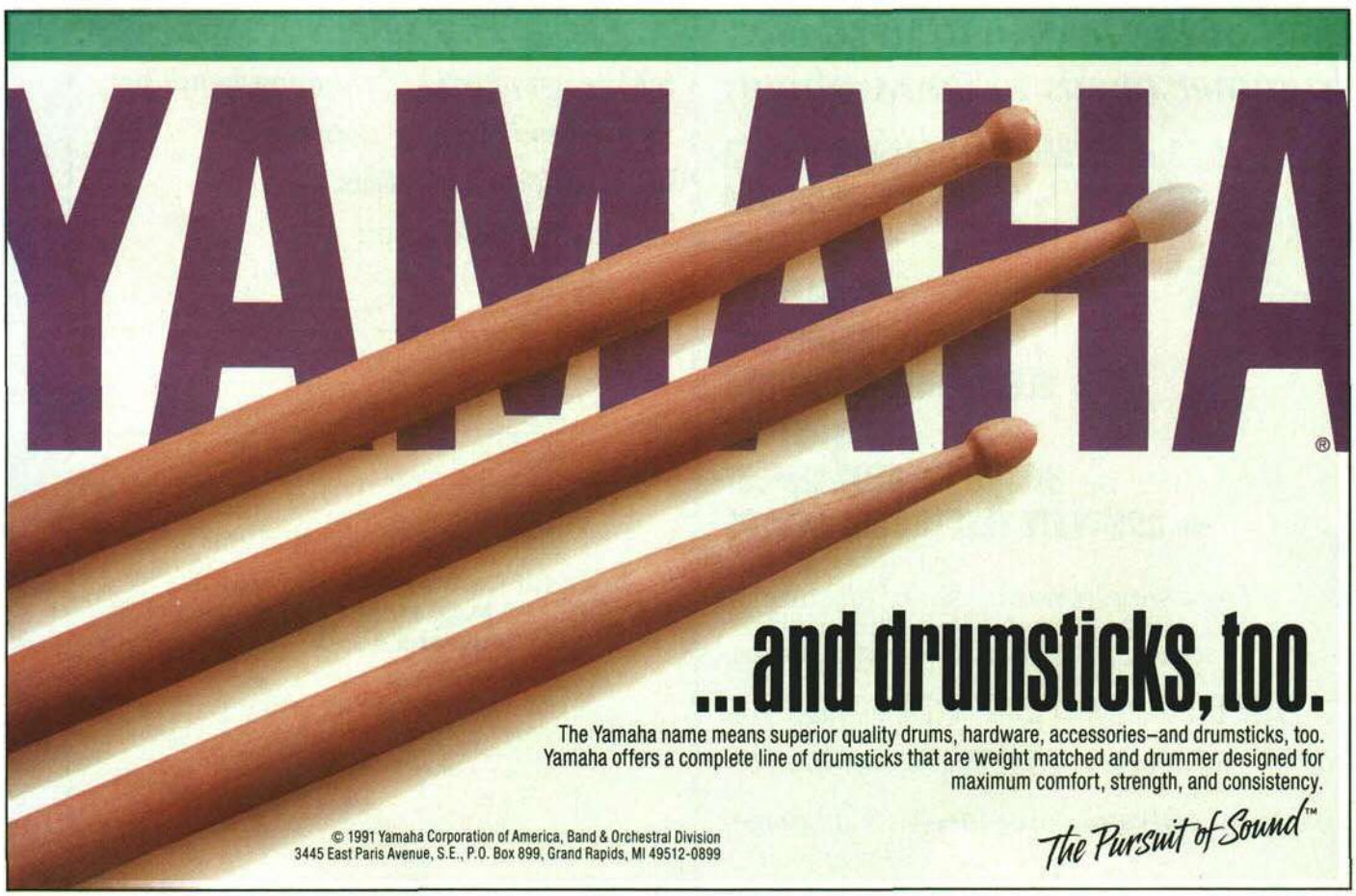
Bamba" also conjures up a story from Curry's memory: "I was rehearsing in Vancouver with Bryan for the *Into The Fire* tour, and Mitchell Froom had been trying to find me. I called him back and he said, 'Can you come to L.A.? I need you for an hour.' I said, 'If you really only need me for an hour, I can come.' So I flew down the next day. I got in at about noon, and I was at the studio by 2:00. We did two takes of the song, and they edited it together exactly at the middle breakdown. We didn't use a click track, and I was really nervous. I kept saying, 'Mitchell, it's not going to work, but I don't have time. Can we just do a bunch of takes from start to finish?' And he said, 'No, this will work. Stick around for five minutes, and we'll do an edit.' He did an edit on the song and you couldn't tell. I got back on a plane, and I was in Vancouver for an 8:00 rehearsal. Of course, I hear the original Richie Valens version of the song, and I just melt. If I had listened to it and studied it a little more, I probably would have been able to do it better."

Mickey also cites some of his Hall & Oates recordings as favorites as well. "Of course 'Adult Education,' with the huge drums at the end, is a favorite. There's also a song called 'Say It Isn't So,' which I think is a good drum track. It really grooves, and the fills are simple. They're not really fills where you go around the drumkit; they're kind of one-note, quarter- or 8th-note things that are real simple and basic, but they groove really well. That was another one that was one take. And I really like 'Family Man' as well, for the same reason I like 'Fire Woman' from the Cult. It's just a straight-ahead groove with very few drum fills, just kick and snare, and it works. I remember reading an interview with Steve Gadd where he said, 'I try not to think of what I should play; I think of what I *shouldn't* play.' So the idea is, where can I leave things out?"

With all the studio work Curry has been doing, going on the road the length of Adams' current tour was somewhat of a risk. "There are a million reasons why I should have gone—and then of course a bunch of reasons why I *shouldn't* have. I think the reason I decided to go, first and foremost, was because I'm comfortable with Bryan. I didn't have to relearn anything. I didn't have to go into a strange situation and get acclimated to a different environment. It was just a matter of learning some of the new songs, so it was



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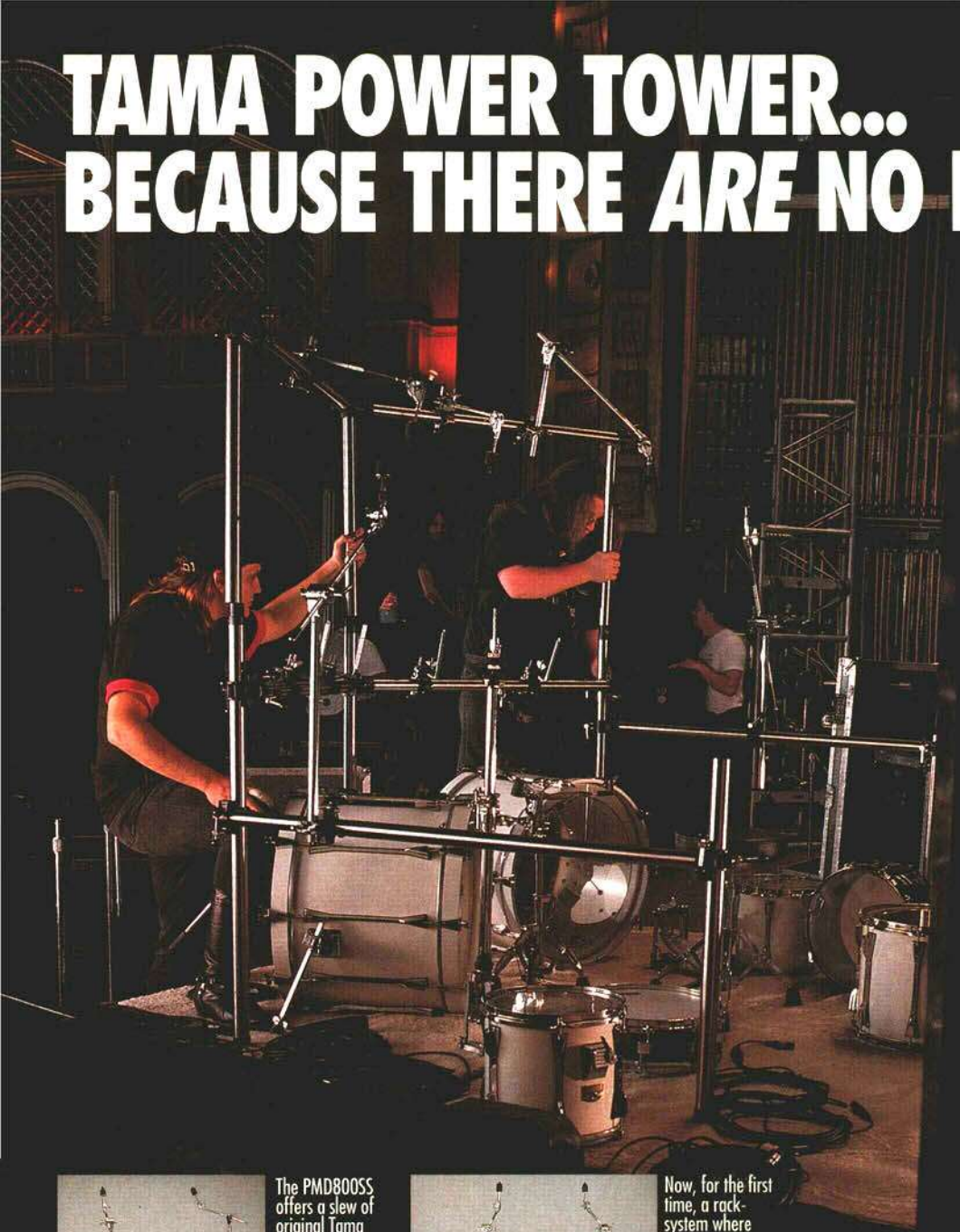

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easy. It's a safety thing. I can go out and play songs I'm used to playing, stuff that I came up with myself. I don't have to go out and cover someone else's parts.

"The live thing is still the best playing for me," Curry declares. "You go out and play on stage in front of 20,000 people, and there's nothing like it. For self-satisfaction, though—just me trying to keep myself happy musically—the studio is the way to go. I can rework and rethink things until they're right where I want them. But there's still something about the spontaneity of playing live—the excitement and just throwing the stuff out there, playing whatever comes out and getting the audience response that we've been getting. There's nothing like it."

Mickey does concede that playing the same songs every night can get monotonous, but, he says, "When you're out there on stage in front of all these people, you can't *not* have fun. Recording work, though, can be downright *nerve-wracking* for Mickey. Since his last *Modern Drummer* interview, in 1985, when his main gig was Hall & Oates and becoming a session player was more of a dream than a reality, Mickey's situation has changed radically. Yet Curry claims that success has made it harder on him, not easier.

"I'm probably less secure now than when we did that first interview," he confides. "In 1985 I was playing with a band that had had number-one hits back to back. I was very confident in the fact that I had a gig and I was making money. It was all new and exciting. Now that I went through that and have expanded my experience—like doing different studio records and taking a tour here and there—it's just more angles to have to be concerned with."

Yet another angle Mickey has been working on lately is songwriting. "I have a little Yamaha porta-studio with a *DX7* and a Linn machine," Curry explains. "I hang microphones from my stairwell and play drums in the basement, and I can sing lead as well." Sounds like a situation that could lead to Mickey's pursuing an artist deal. "All that still scares me—to have to be my own entity. If I'm a wreck playing drums," he laughs, "I'd be like a mental case trying to be an artist!"

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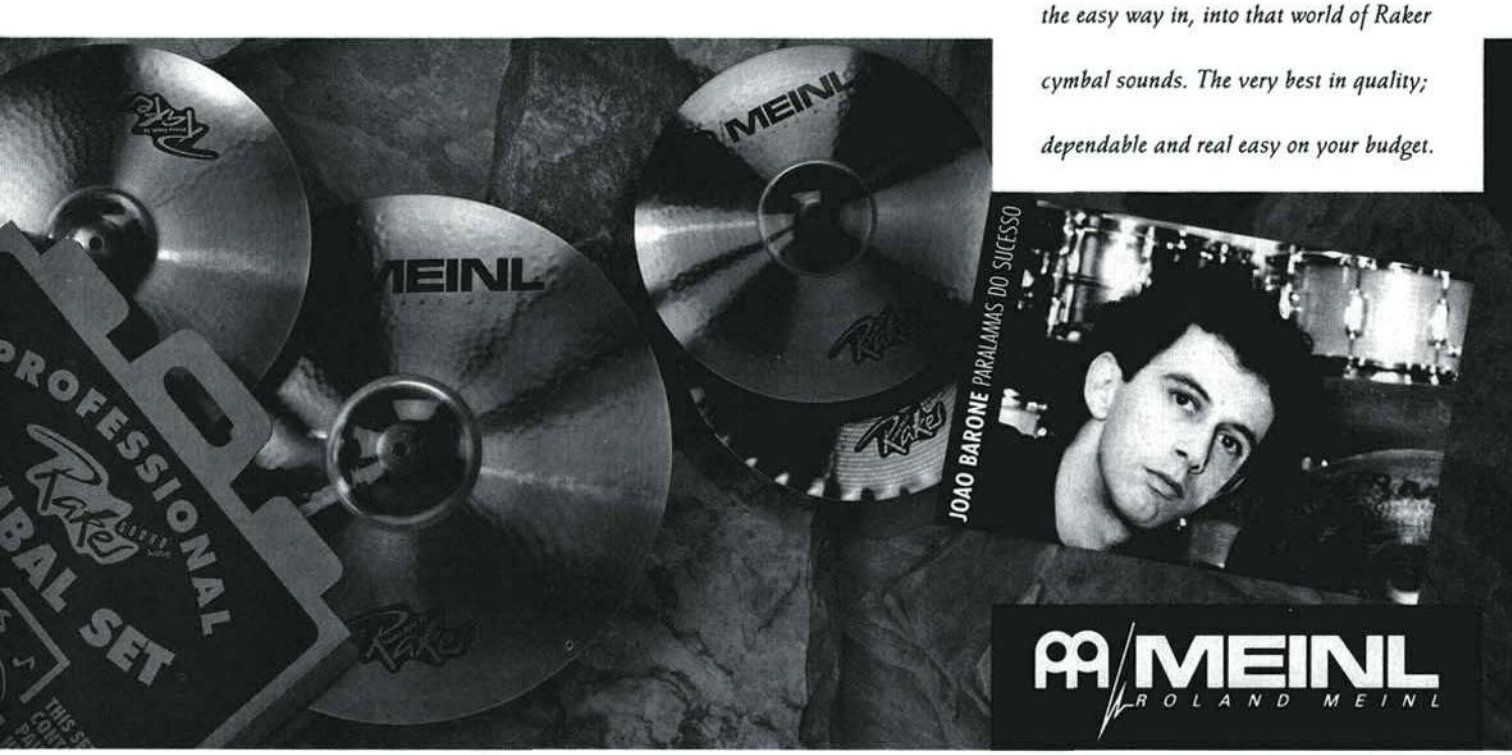

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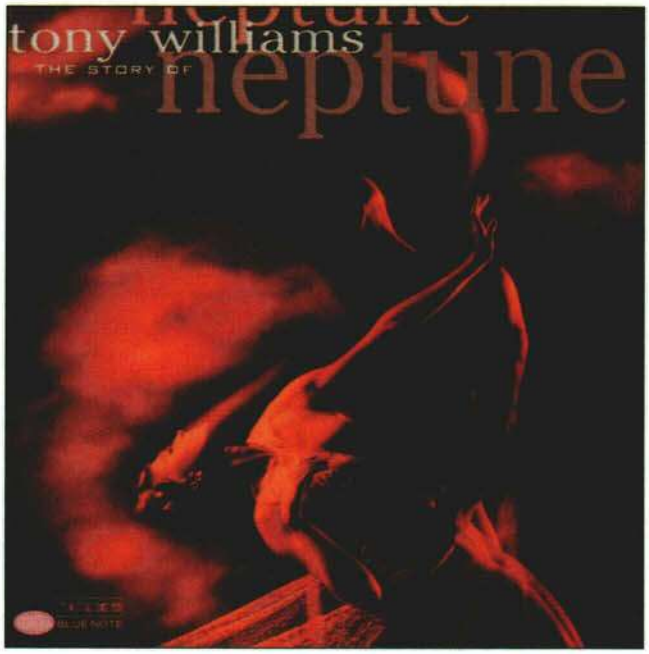

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If you've ever seen Tony Williams live, you know the shock to the system that takes place. Besides being very loud and powerful, Williams plays with such nerve that the band is either obliterated or inspired to new heights of improvisation. After a number of good Williams albums, *Story Of Neptune* captures this spirit in all its scary, thunderous glory, while Tony's new compositions establish him as one of jazzdom's best writers.

Story Of Neptune is a thematic work in three parts. "The Overture" is an uptempo drumming showcase, with Williams' driving double stick-ing pushing the "epic" sound of the piece. "Creatures Of Conscious" is almost eight minutes of the leader trading 8's with the band, broken up by a long, sculptured drum solo. Covers of "Blackbird" and "Poinciana" are pretty with good solos, and "Birdlike" ends the album in a burning bebop free-for-all, edged ahead by Williams' foot-propelled, steamroller hi-hat, which busily chirps four to the bar.

Along with *Believe It, Emergency,* and Miles Davis's *"Four" And More, Story Of Neptune* stands as a quintessential link in Tony Williams' evolving growth as a drummer and composer.

• ***Ken Micallef***

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CHRIS NAIL: dr
Soul Search Me; Unforgiven; I Am The Cross; Un-born Again; Into The Void; The Truth; The Law; Incontinence; (Cadence Of) The Dirge

Chris Nail, drummer for Louisiana thrash outfit Exhorder, shows off his playing and musical training not only with a fine recorded effort on the band's latest, *The Law,* but also with 30 pages of intricately detailed transcriptions of all the songs on *The Law* in a spiral book (sold separately).

It's easy to appreciate Nail's athletic playing in itself. But with the book, the performance can be seen in a whole new context. Like all thrash, *The Law* is filled with very fast, intense, angry music. But just when you think you've heard all that double bass has to offer, along comes Nail, whose legs run a marathon and then some during the album's 38-plus minutes. Short bursts of double kick underline "Unforgiven," while the band shifts gears into a thrash-rap-funk on "Un-born Again." And Nail makes Sabbath's "Into The Void" his own—without sacrificing the integrity of the song—with more double-bass work.

You can see why Nail's book has more black in it than white. There are 32nd notes strung together all over the place, and the transcriptions will challenge anyone's sight-reading skills. Together, the album and book present a unique and worthwhile package and a triumph in articulation for Nail. (*To order the transcription book, send $10—which includes postage—to Exhorder, Box 64027, Kenner, LA 70064.)*

• ***Matt Peiken***

YELLOWJACKETS

Live Wires
GRP Records GRD-9667
RUSSELL FERRANTE: kybd
JIMMY HASLIP: bs
WILLIAM KENNEDY: dr
BOB MINTZER: sx, bs clar, EWI
Homecoming; Bright Lights; The Dream; Freedomland; Downtown; Claire's Song; Geraldine; The Spin; Wildlife; Revelation

Whoever had the idea to put out a live Yellowjackets release deserves a raise. The caliber of these musicians is without question, but unfortunately their studio releases—while being well-played and full of good music—never have the *same fire* that you'd experience at one of their performances. These guys just seem to take it to another level live.

Live Wires is a good example of the kind of musical challenge Will Kennedy is faced with in this band. Will has to cover a lot of styles, be creative within those styles, and still leave his mark and be musical—tall order! Every

track features Will in a different light, and no matter which, he nails it: "Homecoming" is syncopated pop-fusion, "Bright Lights" is funk; "The Dream" is pop (with Michael Franks guesting on lead vocals); "Freedomland" is songo-esque; "Downtown" is uptempo swing (incredible drum breaks in this one); "Claire's Song" is up-Latin; "Geraldine" is a ballad in 6; "The Spin" is *way* uptempo swing; "Wildlife" (with its nice opening duet between Will and guest percussionist Paulinho Da Costa) is an African-influenced 6/8; and finally there's "Revelation," a gospel shuffle (with vocals by guest artists Take 6).

Will's in top form on every track, grooving and playing with great taste. If you're not familiar with him or the band, pick this one up. If you have heard them before, you're probably *already* listening to it—over and over!

• *William F. Miller*

JACK DEJOHNETTE

Earth Walk
Blue Note CDP 7 96690 2
JACK DEJOHNETTE: dr
MICHAEL CAIN: pno, synth
GARY THOMAS: tn sx, fl
GREG OSBY: al sx, sp sx
LONNIE PLAXICO: bs
It's Time To Wake Up And Dream; Blue; Where Or Wayne; Priestesses Of The Mist; Earth Walk; On Golden Beams; One On One; Lydia; Monk's Plumb.

For his debut on Blue Note, Jack DeJohnette has combined old with new, delivering an album that comes from the tradition Blue Note represents, but that uses that tradition as a stepping stone into the future. Rather than honor

influential players by recording their tunes, DeJohnette wrote new compositions based on their contributions, as with "Where Or Wayne" and "Monk's Plumb," dedicated respectively to Wayne Shorter and Thelonious Monk.

DeJohnette also calls attention to the players in his own band, such as in "One On One," written to showcase the rapport between saxophonists Greg Osby and Gary Thomas. Indeed, DeJohnette proves himself a generous leader here, giving the other members the bulk of the solo space. There are fewer drum solos on *Earth Walk* than on most DeJohnette albums, with DeJohnette preferring to mix it up with the other players, simultaneously accompanying and prodding them, his drumming serving as the steering wheel that aims the band's vehicle in multiple directions. The only thing consistent about Jack DeJohnette is his creativity. Beyond that, it's hard to come up with identifying characteristics that allow you to label him.

• *Rick Mattingly*

DEE DEE BRIDGEWATER

In Montreaux
Verve DEE-2
DEE DEE BRIDGEWATER: vcl
BERT VAN DEN BRINK: pno
HEIN VAN DE GEYN: bs
ANDRE (DE DE) CECCARELLI: dr
All Of Me; How Insensitive (Insensatez); Just Friends; A Child Is Born; Strange Fruit; Night In Tunisia; Horace Silver Medley: Sister Sadie, Next Time I Fall In Love, Senor Blues

Here is a dazzling and thoughtfully arranged recording by one of the world's premier jazz singers. Dee Dee Bridgewater was a soulful young charmer with the Thad Jones-Mel Lewis Jazz Orchestra in the '70s before crossing over with *Just Family,* which was produced by Stanley Clarke. In the '80s, responding to her success in Europe, Dee Dee bridged the water permanently. Today she continues to wow them throughout the Continent and is heard internationally on her NPR program, "Jazz From Paris."

Bridgewater cites the legendary Sarah Vaughan as her primary influence, as this fine collection of standards proves. It's fitting, then, that drummer Andre Ceccarelli serves up some of the tastiest playing here since Roy Haynes sat down behind Sassy herself. Not just a polite timekeeper but a full participant in a democratic conversation, Ceccarelli is a commanding presence throughout. He powers these fresh reinterpretations with a muscular rimshot, full-throated toms, and an unerring swing. His Dutch colleagues are first-rate as well. And if Bridgewater has warmed your blood in English, need I mention her *Francais?* Recommended.

• *Hal Howland*

THE SUGARCUBES

Stick Around For Joy
Elektra 61123-2
EINAR ORN: vcl
BJORK GUDMONDSDOTTIR: vcl
SIGGI BALDURSSON: dr
BRAGI OLAFSSON: bs
THOR ELDON: gtr
MAGGA ORNOLFSDOTTIR: kybd
Gold; Hit; Leash Called Love; Lucky Night; Happy Nurse; I'm Hungry; Walkabout; Hetero Scum; Vitamin; Chihuahua

From the opening rimshot of the first track from these Icelandic darlings' latest, we know something has changed for the better. Labeled "quirky" by the music media in the past, the Cubes take a harder-edged, funk-pumped, kicking guitar approach on *Stick Around For Joy.* Bjork Gudmondsdottir's feline vocals still enchant, Einar Orn's bootwalk, repetitive sing-speak still repels, but this is a band whose diverse influences (Maria Callas to speed metal) find a unique voice in their slant on global pop.

Buzzing along like some James Bond soundtrack with Bart Simpson in the starring

role, the Sugarcubes still display a knack for humor, but are intent in their musical aims. Rangy guitars and cooing keyboards frame the mix, but it is Siggi Baldursson's booming, XTC-ish (thanks to producer Paul Fox) drumming that rides front and center. He has taken the lead in pummeling the rest of the Cubes into the '90s. Each track features his insistent prodding—an original mix of world beat, hip hop, and Clyde Stubblefield. Accents land in unexpected places, adding an odd twist to Baldursson's slinky, chug-a-lug rhythms.

Geysers and volcanos notwithstanding, the Sugarcubes are one of Iceland's true natural resources.

• ***Ken Micallef***

TOM HARRELL

Visions
Contemporary CCD-14063-2
TOM HARRELL: trp, flglhn
JOE LOVANO, DAVID LIEBMAN, BOB BERG, GEORGE ROBERT: sx
CHERYL PYLE: fl
JAMES WILLIAMS, NIELS LAN DOKY, DANILO PEREZ, DADO MORONI: pno
JOHN ABERCROMBIE: gtr synth
RAY DRUMMOND, CHARLIE HADEN, REGGIE JOHNSON: bs
ADAM NUSSBAUM, BILLY HART, PAUL MOTIAN, BILL GOODWIN: dr
April Mist; Visions Of Gaudi; Suspended View; I Don't Know; Autumn Picture; Opaling; Because I Love You; Everything I Love

Here's a fine opportunity for a drummer to behold the art of accompaniment. Recorded over a period of three years with five different groups (three quintets and two sextets), *Visions* offers a lesson in sensitivity, good taste, and individuality.

Adam Nussbaum lights up

"April," an easy half-time samba, and "Gaudi," a rumba cum bossa, with his relaxed feel, warm sound, and subtle rim-click flams.

A soft Afro-Cuban 6/8 leading to a smooth 4/4, coaxed along by colorful cymbals and tom-toms, "View" finds Billy Hart willing to challenge the leader without ever getting in the way. And the unmistakable lope and chattering roll of Paul Motian provide the perfect underpinning to Harrell's elegant flugelhorn on the bossa-pop "Don't Know." Motian also depicts "Autumn" with gently rustling brushwork, letting the time ebb and flow on the breeze.

The final three cuts reveal the instinctive communication of a working band, the George Robert/Tom Harrell Quintet. Bill Goodwin's crisp snare, raintop cymbals, natty solos (recalling the eminently tasteful Billy Higgins), and modulated burn are the essence of acoustic small-group playing.

• ***Hal Howland***

RANDY WESTON

The Spirits Of Our Ancestors
Antilles 314-511896-2
RANDY WESTON: pno
IDREES SULIEMAN, DIZZY GILLESPIE: trp
BENNY POWELL: tbn
TALIB KIBWE, BILLY HARPER, DEWEY REDMAN, PHAROAH SANDERS: sx
ALEX BLAKE, JAMIL NASSER: bs
IDRIS MUHAMMAD: dr
BIG BLACK, AZZEDIN WESTON: perc
YASSIR CHADLY: genbri, karkaba, vcl
African Village Bedford Stuyvesant 1; The Healers; African Cookbook; La Elaha-Ella Allah/Morad Allah; The Call; African Village Bedford Stuyvesant 2; The Seventh Queen; Blue Moses; African Sunrise; A Prayer For Us All

Pianist Weston digs deep on this ode to the motherland, tying together the influences of Thelonious Monk, bebop, blues, '60s avant-garde, and African music into one profound, organic package.

Weston's interest in Gnawa, the healing music of Morocco, is represented here by "Blue Moses" and "La Elaha-Ella Allah/Morad Allah," two percussion-chanting pieces that use the karkaba (or steel castanets) as a clave. The larger ensemble pieces, like the exhilarating "African Cookbook" and "The Call," with muscular arrangements by Melba Liston, merge the elegant sweep of Ellingtonia with the grandeur of the African diaspora, while leaving room for some extraordinary soloists. Meanwhile, drummer Idris Muhammad shifts gears from 6/4 and 12/8 meters to a straightforward slow blues groove on "The Seventh Queen" and pushes the 11-piece ensemble through a burning "African Village Bedford Stuyvesant."

This is spiritual music that grooves—Weston's Afrocentrist vision for One Nation Under A Groove.

• ***Bill Milkowski***

BOOKS

SELF-PUBLISHED DRUM BOOKS

In this age of desktop publishing and inexpensive photocopying, more and more drummers are publishing their own instructional texts. Several have crossed the *MD* review desk in recent months, and we planned to review several of them, as we did a few months back.

Unfortunately, most of the recent books we've received just didn't have enough strong points to warrant reviews. Keep in mind that *Modern Drummer* itself is a privately published magazine, which Ron Spagnardi started in his basement, so we tend to identify with individuals who are taking the first steps into their own small businesses. But, to be blunt, scrawling a few rhythms down on paper, getting them photocopied, and having them spiral bound does not automatically earn a review.

We're not out to embarrass anyone, so no names will be mentioned here. But there were some recurring problems in a lot of the books we've received in the past few months, so we're going to cover a few of them in this "review." Our aim is not to discourage anyone from attempting to publish a book, but to suggest some guidelines that should be considered.

First of all, there is no excuse for books that are

almost illegible. Text should certainly be done on a computer, not on a bad typewriter, and music should probably be engraved with a computer music program, of which there are several now available. If the music can't be engraved, it should at *least* be neat. Anything done on a computer should be laser printed, not run off on dot-matrix. Don't assume that your material is so incredible that no one will care how it looks. If you are going to be asking people to pay for your book, you have a certain obligation to make it look presentable.

Of course, another problem we've seen is books that were beautifully done on computers and professionally bound—but without any *substance.* Just because it looks great doesn't mean it's worth anything. So make sure the quality of material matches the quality of production.

Next, don't rewrite someone else's book and think you're going to impress anyone. And don't think no one will notice. Most good drum teachers are very familiar with a lot of drum books, and they can spot a rip-off right off the bat. Also, don't overlook the fact that you can be sued for copyright infringement if the material is obviously plagiarized.

Okay, you're not intentionally trying to rip off another book, but you think you can explain the same material better, or you have a new twist on an old subject. This can be a tricky one. If you really are able to explain something better than it has ever been explained before, and you can supply exercises that are significantly different than what's already out there, then go for it. But don't write a whole book just to make one small point.

Many of the books we receive are from teachers who like to arrange material in their own way. That's fine, and there is nothing wrong with teachers putting such books together to sell to their own students. With most of this material we've seen, the information is correct, but essentially, we've seen it all before. This is especially true of beginning books. Let's face it, they've all got the same basic rhythms.

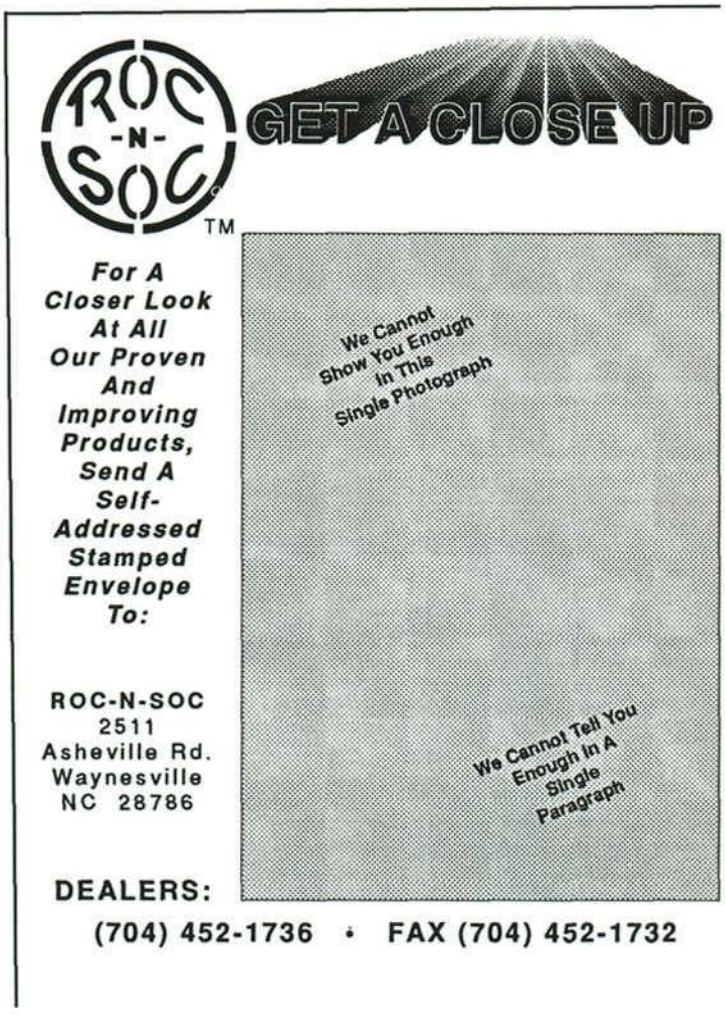
A similar problem is books with lack of focus. There is a little bit of this, a little bit of that, and a bunch of something else. But the material isn't tied together in any particular way. Imagine a textbook that had a chapter about the Civil War, followed by a chapter on gardening, followed by a chapter dealing with relationships. The information might all be valid, and one could argue that any educated person should know about all these topics. But the best books cover one basic subject and cover it well.

Of course, we've also seen books that take a single idea and expand it to the point of ridiculousness, such as a book without a single written note, just *thousands* of L's and R's in every conceivable combination. Or a book in which every possible polyrhythm was worked out mathematically, to where you could see how to play 11 against 15 by subdividing the bar into 165 parts. The most common problem is books that appear to have been written with a slide rule: every possible coordination pattern, but most of them are neither practical nor musical.

The final consideration we'll mention is price. We're seeing a lot of books that are poorly produced being priced around $15. Meanwhile, major publishers are sending in books twice as thick and professionally engraved that sell for $12. Sure, big publishers can afford larger print runs, which keeps their cost-per-book down. But don't assume that consumers will be happy to pay extra for an amateurish-looking book because they admire your independent spirit. People want to spend their money wisely, so price your book competitively. You stand to make more by keeping the price down and selling a lot of books, rather than only selling a few copies of a high-priced book.

Again, we don't want to discourage drummers with good ideas from putting their own books together. After all, the Chapin book was self-published, and so were *Stick Control* and Ted Reed's various books. So keep writing down those ideas. But before you decide to print up a thousand copies, run ads, and solicit a review in *MD,* make sure you have something worthwhile to say, and make sure that you are presenting your material in a reasonably professional manner.

• ***Rick Mattingly***



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When it got to the straight-ahead shuffle part, I'm thinking, "This is no 'fusoid.' This is a serious groove merchant." The backbeat had that "Big Dog" vibe. It was so locked down and settled, for a minute I wondered if this was a trick, and that it was a drum machine. I mean that as a compliment. Anyhow, the music was taking me somewhere else, and I just wouldn't have thought of Jeff in this context, instrumental music and all. It's certainly him, though. It's the first time I've heard him stretch a bit. He never loses his personality, regardless of what he plays. That's the key, really. Jeff always sounds exactly like Jeff. "Confirming...message received!"

...Jim Keltner

Ry Cooder: "Clip Joint Rhumba" (from *Johnny Handsome)* Keltner, drums; Cooder, guitars, percussion, tuba, piano, bass, accordion, fiddle

AN: That's Jim Keltner with Ry Cooder. The music is as much a giveaway as the drumming. Those two always bring the best out of each other. I guess they came from the same tribe as well.

Jim plays stuff that is almost nerdy—or I should say, if anyone else played it, it would definitely be nerdy. But when Jim plays it, it comes out hip. He plays licks that no one else would ever think of. His thinking is not typical "drum thinking." It all comes off very artsy, the way he does it. Jim is like a kindergartner on acid. He has mastered something quite unique. Completely predetermined, he can sound like a beginner, like someone with no chops, yet in all of its sloppiness and looseness, it somehow all hangs together, and every note of it is completely inside the groove—every damn note!

It takes tremendous control to sound like you have no control. Some of his fills are so mentally ill, so bizarre...it sounds like the whole drumset is falling off the back of a truck. As far as his being noncommittal, well, he alludes to things on the drums; he would never come straight out and say it, he just suggests a thought, then never again. It's never black and white with Jim, he plays in between the cracks.

Trying to find the words to describe what he does is so difficult. To me, Jim is more of a *"jazz-cat"* than a lot of people who call themselves jazz musicians. Without upsetting the groove, he is always improvising, in a very subtle and slinky way. He never plays a song the same way twice in a row, never sounds rehearsed, and always sounds like it's the first time he's ever stumbled upon that lick. His sticks are his paint brushes. Jim is truly an artist.

...David Garibaldi

Tower Of Power: "Soul Vaccination" (from *In the Slot)*

AN: Turn it off. I definitely know who that is. Dave Garibaldi had such a definite concept in his playing, so clearly defined, so well thought out. I saw him play with Tower Of Power in 1970. I haven't seen him play since then. Once was enough. He was so balanced, everything was so geometric, like perfect 90° angles. To me, he was the first one to really open up the 16th-note funk grooves. He pulled all the upbeat 16th notes out of the bar, and gave them a real part in the groove—and consequently, a part in the music. They were no longer just passing notes. They became accents in the patterns he played. I'm sure Tower Of Power wrote a lot of those horn stabs around his playing.

Dave had that internal motion going through his playing all the time. He would pick three or four 16th notes in each bar to accent, which would become part of the pattern. But he would never lose that inside motion, that rolling train thing. He always kept it percolating with all the little grace notes in between the backbeats. It takes so much control to get that stuff going. All the notes are played at different volumes to make it really swing. He had a great sense of dynamics within his four limbs.

I speak in the past tense because I haven't heard him play in twenty years. Forgive me if I'm not tuned in, but where the hell is Dave Garibaldi today? I never hear about him. It seems to me that a player like that should be a household name, or playing on a lot of records—certainly more visible than he is. I should be feeling his presence more strongly. Dave, are you there?

...Dennis Chambers

John Scofield: "Trim" (from *Blue Matter)* Chambers, drums; Scofield, guitar; Gary Grainger, bass; Mitchell Forman, keyboards; Don Alias, percussion

AN: This drummer sounds hot. I'm not up on who's who in the fusion scene. I must say I'm not a big fusion fan. After a couple of songs, it all starts to sound the same to me. I suppose you could say the same thing about MTV. Anyhow, this drumming has a lot of fire. He sounds like he's got a deeper groove than most fusion players. Who is it?

KM: It's Dennis Chambers.

AN: Okay, that makes sense. With his R&B background, I can see why this has a deeper pocket. That's what I often miss in fusion music—there's no strong pocket. This track has more commitment to the groove. If that's happening, then I can at least begin to listen to the music. Without it, it doesn't matter how good the others are playing, I don't even want to listen.

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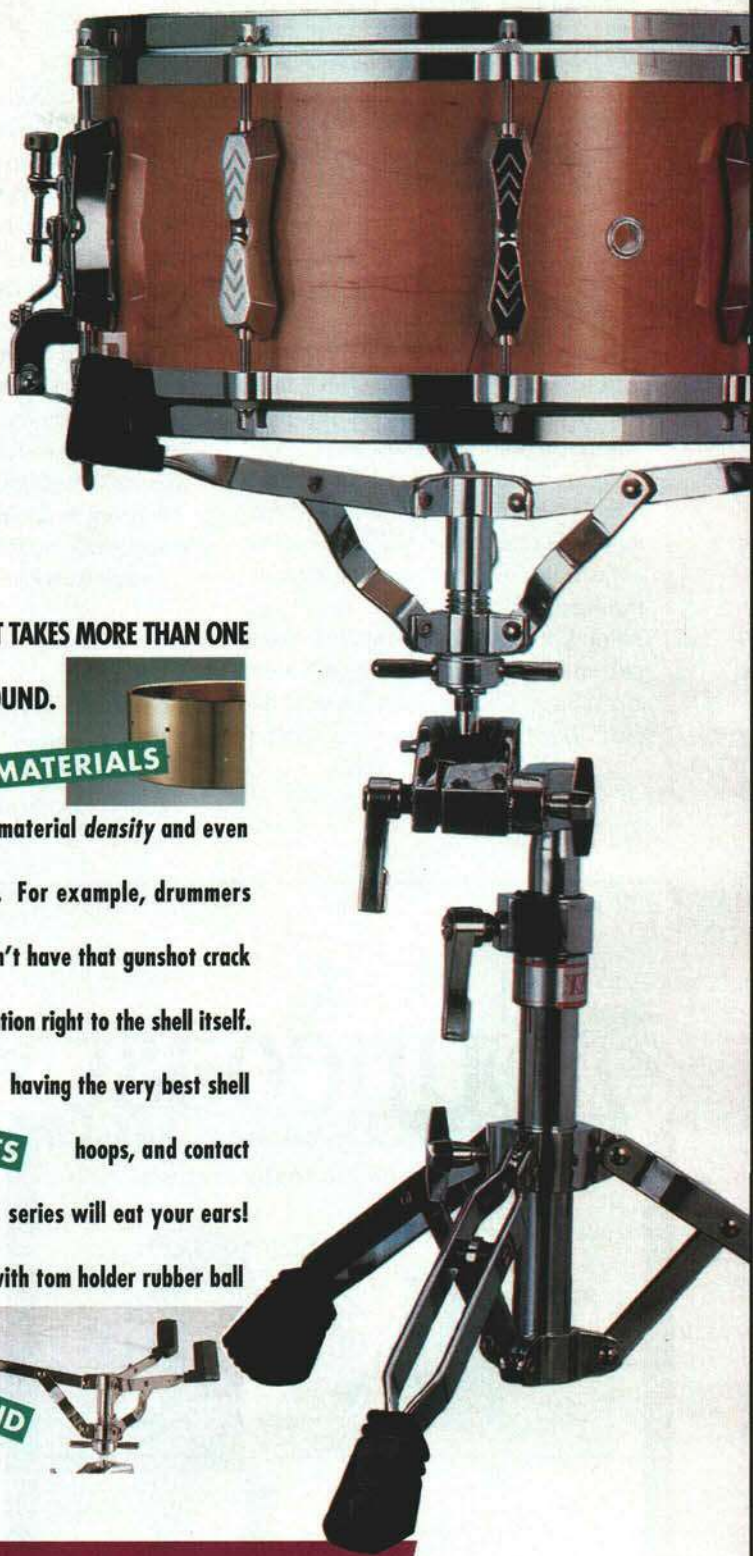

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continued from page 31

of technique and musicality. Also, this record features some of the nicest brush playing you'll ever want to hear. (Check out the tune "Billy Boy.")

12
CREAM
Disraeli Gears

Ginger Baker has a style and approach to the drums all his own. With his work in this '60s supergroup, Ginger's technical skills were highlighted to great effect. Perched behind his multi-tom, double bass setup, Ginger drove the trio, and on this particular record such classic tracks as "Strange Brew" and "Sunshine Of Your Love" have the Baker stamp all over them. (Ginger's work on *Wheels Of Fire,* with his epic live solo "Toad," received several votes for this listing as well.)

13
DUKE ELLINGTON
"Skin Deep"

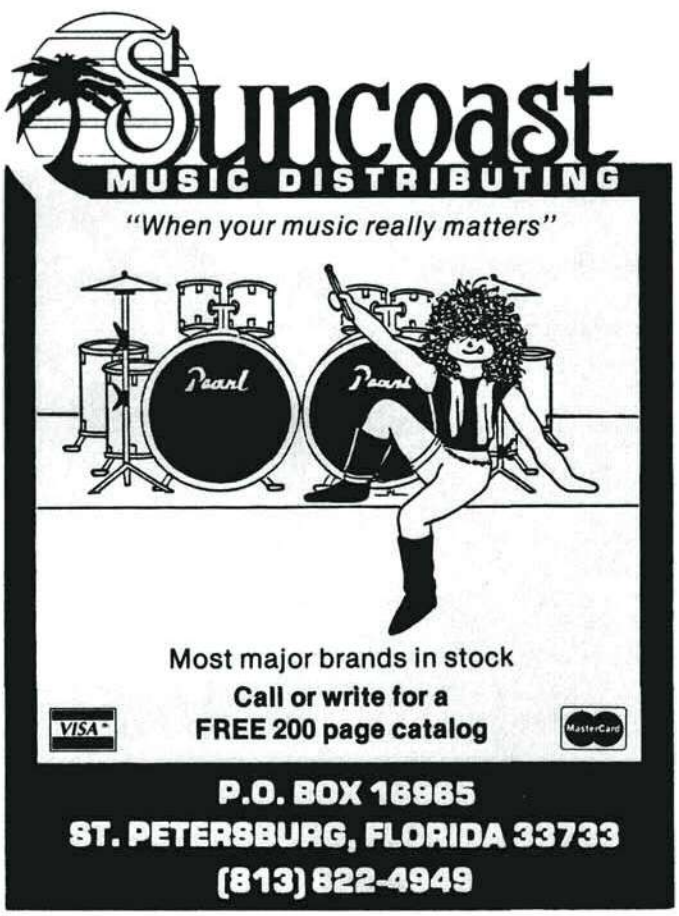
Louie Bellson is a living legend. His playing with many great artists, along with his own great bands, has been heralded by jazz fans and critics alike. In March of 1951, Louie left Harry James to join Duke Ellington's band, a situation that really spotlighted his talents as both a master drummer and great arranger. Louie did the arrangement for "Skin Deep," and the interplay between the band and Louie was very musical. On this performance his great technique is evident, and he masterfully built the solo to a great climax with his double bass work.

14
THE WHO
Who's Next

What drummer understood the sheer audacity of rock better than Keith Moon? His playing sparked the Who to great heights. While pounding out straight-8ths on the bass drum and thrashing slightly out-of-control 16ths on his toms, Keith struck a nerve with more-is-more drummers around the world. The Who had many great records, but on *Who's Next,* with its classic tunes like "Baba O'Riley," "Bargain," "Behind Blue Eyes," and "Won't Get Fooled Again," Keith Moon was at his zenith.

15
DAVE BRUBECK
Time Out

The technical expertise of Joe Morello was showcased on this release. The Brubeck quartet explored odd meters, and with the popularity of "Take Five," the group gently introduced many drummers (and the listening public) to something other than 4/4. Besides his great technique, Joe played with a certain musicality and "touch" that was just inspiring.



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16
JAMES BROWN
Star Time

Even though this is a recently released compilation album, it contains performances by many great drummers, including the three most important JB drummers: Clyde Stubblefield, John "Jabo" Starks, and Melvin Parker. Brown's music always featured the drumming in a prominent way, whether it was during his early rhythm & blues period or later in his funk period. But there's no denying that tunes like "Papa's Got A Brand New Bag," "Cold Sweat," and "Sex Machine" contain some of the best drumming ever recorded.

17
TOWER OF POWER
Back To Oakland

Funk drumming was almost re-invented by the original drumming of David Garibaldi. His layered coordination concept, combined with his beat displacement techniques and his use of dynamics, was amazing enough, but he did all this (and more) while grooving hard. Many Tower Of Power releases featured David's excellent work, but *Back To Oakland* was one of the best. (It includes the classic "Oakland Stroke.")

18
WEATHER REPORT
Heavy Weather

While Weather Report was a band that had some fantastic drummers pass through its ranks on many fine releases, *Heavy Weather* seemed to have something extra. That something extra turned out to be Alex Acuna on drums (with bassist Jaco Pastorius playing traps on a track). Acuna's sound—a combination of funk, Latin, and rock—added a certain life to the band. (And Alex's percussion duet with Manolo Badrena is a joy.)

19
THE POLICE
Zenyatta Mondatta

With Zenyatta *Mondatta,* the Police became an international sensation, and Stewart Copeland's influence on drumming exploded. Because of his combinations of reggae and rock rhythms, along with his own personal sound (tightly tuned snare and toms, splash cymbals, simple-yet-powerful bass drum), Copeland opened up the ears of many drummers. Stand out tracks include "Don't Stand So Close To Me" and "Driven To Tears."

20
YES
Close To The Edge

Bill Bruford received many votes for his playing on a few different albums. His work in the early '70s with Yes was completely original; with his own band, Bruford, the One OM *Kind* record was mentioned several times for Bill's excellent work on the acoustic kit; and on King Crimson's *Discipline,* Bill introduced a generation of drummers to electronics through his innovative use of Simmons drums (within a hybrid kit mixing old and new). *Close To The Edge,* though, was Bruford's high (and final) mark with the band that exposed his uniqueness to millions of eager fans.

21
SLY & THE FAMILY STONE
Fresh

Drummers still call this album a favorite because of the great work of Andy Newmark. "In Time" will always be one of the highlights of his career. Miles Davis was quoted as saying this track was very funky. That sheer funkiness on this track—as well as on several others on the record—simply place it on another level.

22
CHICK COREA
Elektric Band

Dave Weckl's performance on this album received many nominations to the top 25. His precise, almost machine-like accuracy, his staccato sounding kit, and his keen use of dynamics worked perfectly with the Elektric Band's concept. Thanks to this record he has become a big influence on an entire generation of young drummers.

23
FRANKZAPPA
Joe's Garage

Back in the late '70s, Vinnie Colaiuta was introduced to the music community through his tremendous work with Frank Zappa. On this particular collection (originally in two parts) and on another highly nominated record (Shut *Up 'N' Play Yer Guitar),* Vinnie not only handled Zappa's unbelievably challenging music, he took it to greater heights. Vinnie played through the music with such fearlessness that the effect was awe-inspiring.

24
JEFF BECK
There And Back

A very young Simon Phillips recorded this album back in 1980, and for many drummers it was the first exposure to his incredible talent. His approach to rock drumming was enhanced by technical virtuosity, with his ambidexterity and double bass work receiving much attention. The uptempo 7/4 double-bass shuffle "Space Boogie" left many drummers shaken.

25
METALLICA
...And Justice For All

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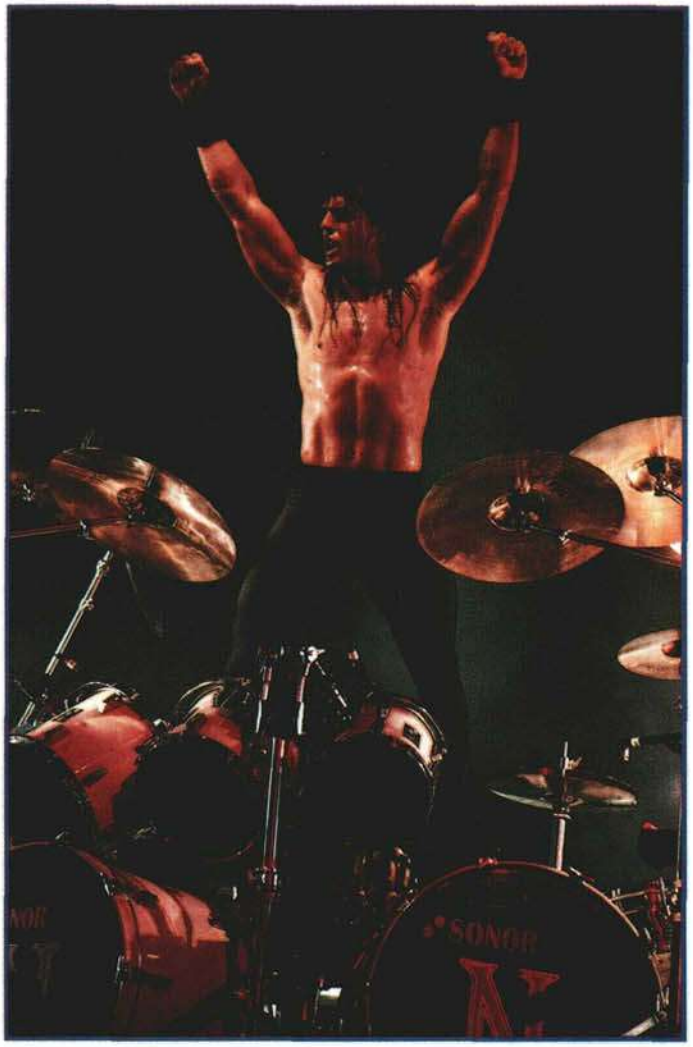

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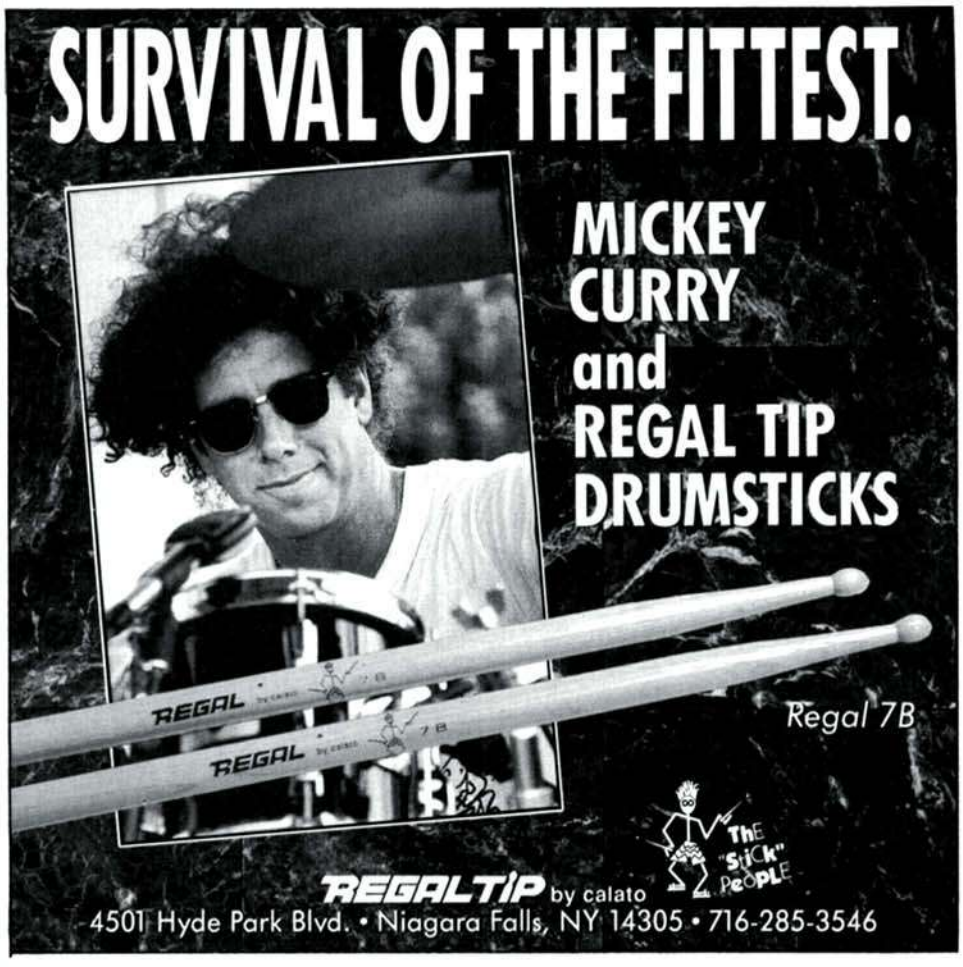

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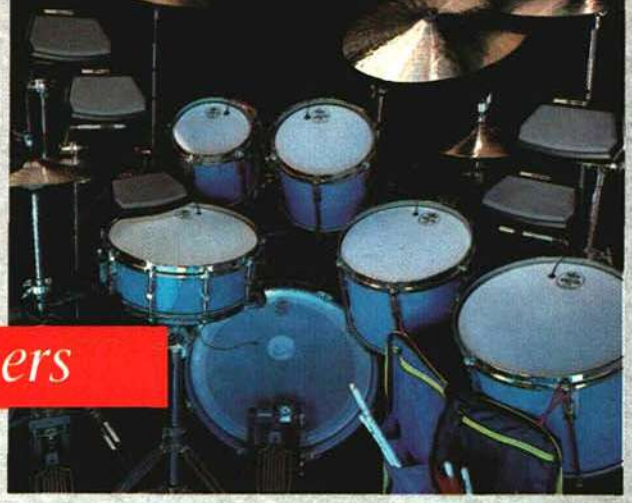

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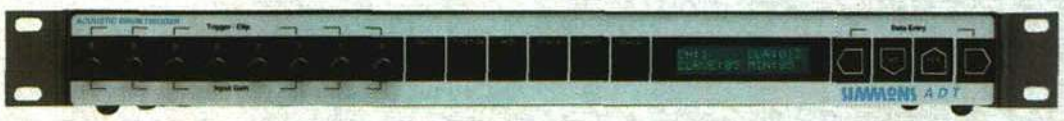

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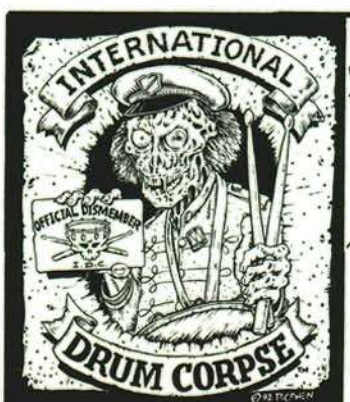

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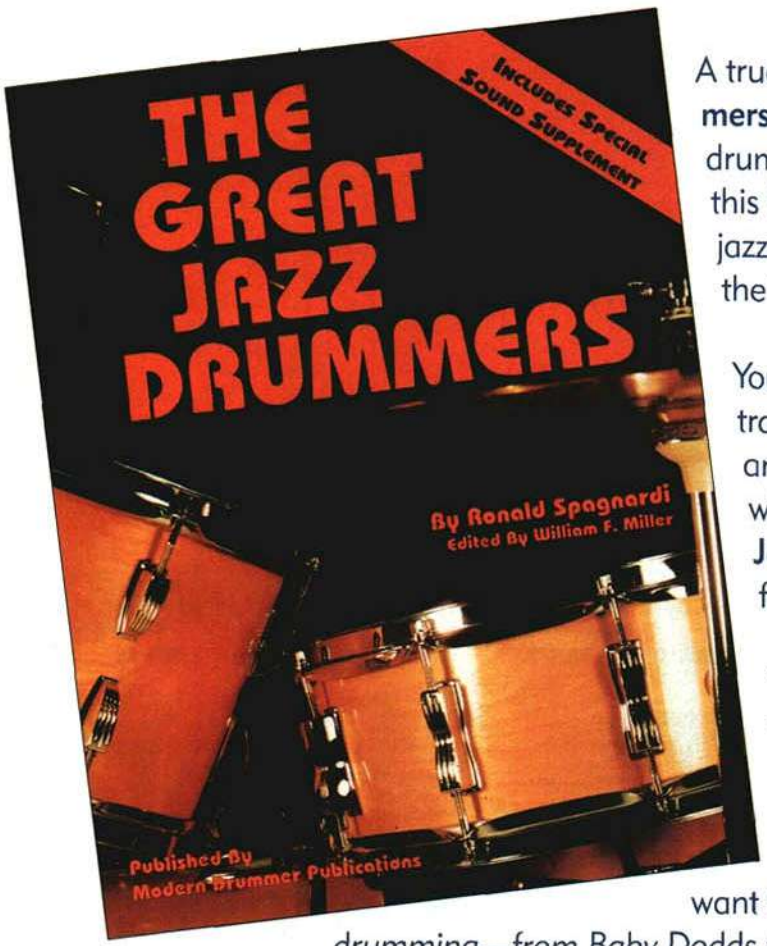

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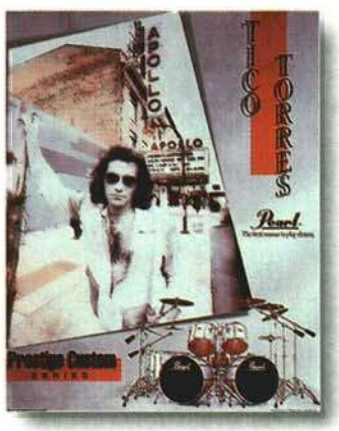
4. 8:30, Weather Report (Peter *Erskine)*
5. *Live In* New *York,* Frank Zappa (Terry *Bozzio)*
6. *Impressions,* John Coltrane (Elvin Jones and Roy *Haynes)*
7. *Birds Of Fire,* Mahavishnu Orchestra (Billy Cobham)
8. *"Four" & More,* Miles Davis (Tony *Williams)*
9. Face *Value,* Phil Collins
10. Back To *Oakland, Tower* Of Power *(David Garibaldi)*

Tommy Wells
1. Rich vs. Roach, Buddy Rich and Max Roach
2. *In A Silent Way,* Miles Davis (Tony *Williams)*
3. "Cold Sweat," James Brown *(Clyde Stubblefield)*
4. *Time Out,* Dave Brubeck (Joe *Morello)*
5. *"The Drum* Thing," John Coltrane *(Elvin Jones)*
6. Moan/'n', Art Blakey & The Jazz Messengers
7. *Blood, Sweat & Tears,* Blood Sweat & Tears (Bobby *Colomby)*
8. Teen Beat, Sandy Nelson
9. *Winelight, Grover* Washington (Steve Gadd)
10. "Aja," Steely Dan (Steve Gadd)

Gregg Bissonette '92

Dennis Chambers '92

Omar Hakim '92



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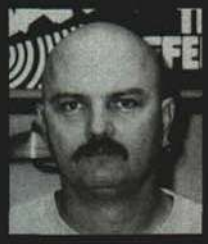

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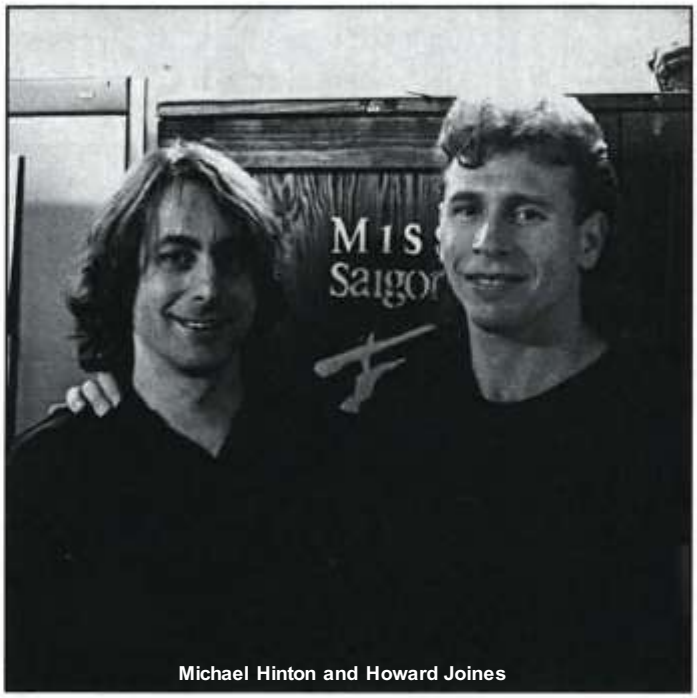
In The Pit For Miss Saigon: Howard Joines And Michael Hinton

• by Rick Van Horn

The "hottest ticket" on Broadway is the Vietnam War-era musical Miss Saigon. *Written by the same composing team that created* Les Miserables, *the American version of the show opened at the Broadway Theater in March of 1991—to the greatest advance sale in the history of the Great White Way.*

An integral element of the show's dramatic appeal is its combination of contemporary Western and authentic Asian musical elements. Rock, pop, and even vaudevillian themes are interspersed with ethnic motifs, and the resulting counterpoint serves both to underscore the plot and create an exciting musical score. And the excitement of that score owes a great deal to the talents of Howard Joines and Michael Hinton, Miss Saigon's *drummer and percussionist. Between the two of them, these two gentlemen strike, stroke, tap, kick, or shake literally dozens of modern and ancient percussion instruments during every performance.*

The score for Miss Saigon *is very detailed, and the composers and orchestrator know just what they want. As a result, in addition to fully-orchestrated numbers, there are tiny spots that receive instrumental color—a single beat that must be played on a specific chime or gong, for example. These minute colorations appear almost random when heard within the pit, but in the context of the action on stage, they add a vital dramatic element. Michael Hinton could not join the discussion when* MD *recently visited a production of* Miss Saigon, *but Howard Joines represented his percussive cohort as well as himself quite eloquently, giving us a perspective on what it's like to play Broadway's hottest—and perhaps most demanding—musical production.*



Michael Hinton and Howard Joines

RVH: *Miss Saigon* is an incredibly complex show. How long did you have for rehearsals before actually entering the theater?

HJ: About two weeks—which is really extravagant for Broadway. When I did *Les Miz,* we had three days, and when I started the last run of *The King And I,* we had one day of rehearsals. We played right through it, then we came in and did previews. We had two weeks with *Miss Saigon* because of the elaborate instrumental and technical involvement, and also because of the orchestrations. We went through the whole show the first day, in six hours of rehearsals. Then it was polishing after that. I think we got through the show three times before we came into the theater.

RVH: Did you have the opportunity to see the book before rehearsal started?

HJ: Yes, which is also unusual, but has to do with how Michael Hinton and I got the gig in the first place. We were both playing *Les Miserables.* The creative team who wrote *Les Miz*—Alain Boublil, Claude-Michel Schonberg, and Herbert Kretzmer—also wrote *Miss Saigon,* and the conductor on *Les Miz,* Bob Billig, left to do this show. They told us quite a bit in advance that they wanted us to move to *Miss Saigon.* We got the book about two months ahead of time, and we spent those two months passing notes back and forth in the pit at *Les Miz* about how we were going to do it.

The book was written for three players for the original London production, but we're doing it with two. When the composers first talked to us, they said that they were going to reorchestrate the parts for us. We asked them to let us see what we could play, because we wanted to do all of it if we could. So we spent two months frantically figuring out what we could do—and we pretty much got every note in.

RVH: Why was a two-man percussion section used in New York when the score was written for three in the London production?

HJ: Money is always a consideration—an extra player costs more. But in our case it may not have been a primary consideration because the producers were very generous in letting us buy instruments. But space was a big factor—we are really tight in here. So they wanted to cut down on that.

RVH: You are literally surrounded by the percussion instruments one would expect to see in a theatrical pit, along with a profusion of gongs, Asian drums, chimes, shakers, and every conceivable type of ethnic item. Obviously, these things just didn't fly up into their current positions in the pit without some forethought. How long did you have to establish the instruments' positioning in the pit?

HJ: When we first got the book, two months ahead of time, our

primary thought was, "How can we make a setup originally designed for three players work for two?" In terms of my own playing—on drumset and additional percussion—I went through the book several times, trying to see if I could play the necessary number of notes with two hands and two feet. In order to do that, I had to get some kind of basic setup going. My rack system evolved out of that need. I knew that I would be playing a lot of drumset, so the drumset was the center. In London, the RotoToms were handled by a separate player, but I knew that I was going to be playing them here. The part is written for three, but there just wasn't room here; I could only fit two on the rack. I knew that I had to be able to get to all the cymbals, the Chinese bao gongs, the nipple gongs, the crasher, the Burma bells, the Thai bell tree, and the crotales fairly quickly, so they had to go somewhere on the rack. I also knew that the *drumKAT had* to be on the rack and close by. Then I use a Chinese drum, and a set of LP *Granite Blocks* that are actually substituting for mokugyo—very large wooden temple blocks that we unfortunately don't have enough room for.

The producers basically sent Michael and me to Manny's Music in Manhattan and gave us carte blanche to get what we needed. I talked to the guys there, and we got a rack and started figuring out how we could put things on it. We came up with a pretty basic setup. At the same time, Michael collected all the various ethnic percussion instruments that the score called for.

Manny's delivered it all to a rehearsal studio in Manhattan on the day before we were to rehearse with the orchestra. We spent about six hours putting everything together. And when that was done, we probably took up as much space as the entire orchestra pit, because at that time we had two odaikos—which are very large taiko-style skin drums—along with a few other items. But when we moved from there into the pit at the theater, we had to reduce things immediately. Some of the larger acoustic instruments had to be put onto a sampler for electronic triggering. I use a *drumKAT* primarily to trigger exotic percussion stuff, while Michael uses the *KAT Mallet Controller* to trigger some mallet-instrument sounds. We really try to play as many of the acoustic instruments as we can fit in here, though, because they just sound better.

It was just a matter of getting in the pit and making it work. I was in a little bit better shape than Michael was, because I had this basic rack that had to come in as it was. But Michael's setup has changed probably three or four times. The whole process for us both ended up being: Put it in the pit, find a place for it, and then find a way to play it. Michael does a lot of moving back and forth—playing the timps and the *KAT* at the same time. As a result, he plays a good deal of the time with his back to the conductor, which is the reason for the two TV monitors in the pit. I can see the conductor from the drumkit—only through a clear plastic panel that separates us from the rest of the orchestra. And we only hear the rest of the orchestra through monitors.

RVH: What experience do you and Michael have on ethnic percussion that would make the composers of *Miss Saigon* feel confident that you could then handle all of this?

HJ: Michael is very interested in Eastern cultures and has a lot of experience in that. He has a lot of these instruments himself at home. My background is mainly from school—Southern Mississippi University and Eastman. Up at Eastman, when I was doing a lot of new music, I played a lot more of these instruments. I graduated in '81 with a masters in music performance.

RVH: How did you get from there to being a first-call player on Broadway so quickly? Some drummers wait twenty years before they get a break like that.

HJ: I actually came to New York City with a musical called *Cleavage* that was "bound for Broadway." It was put together out of town, came in for its big opening—and closed the same night. But I made enough contacts to get my name around, and that got me started here. It's something that I wasn't looking for, but I'm really glad it happened. For a long time people have had this image that "real players" don't play Broadway. But over the past few years, things have totally changed. The studio scene is not what it once was in New York, and now

Here are the instruments that Howard Joines and Michael Hinton play on Miss Saigon.

Drummer's List

Drumkit: bass drum, snare drum, 3 tom-toms, 2 RotoToms, hi-hat, ride cymbal, 3 crash cymbals, China cymbal
1 drumKAT MIDI controller (for triggering samples of gross cassa, Odaiko, tsutsumi, kabuki clapper, Tibetan skull drum, piatti cymbals, and sistrum)
1 drum trigger (attached to bass drum to trigger gross cassa and Odaiko)
1 xylophone
1 set of crotales
2 *Mark Trees* (wind chimes)
2 Thai bell trees (made with crotales)
2 Thai bell trees (made with bells)
2 Chinese bao gongs
2 nipple gongs
1 32" Tam-Tam (Chinese gong)
2 Burma bells
1 kin (temple bell)
2 infinity bars (chings)
pair crotales (chings)
crasher (sistrum)
double coin clapper with handle
2 Chinese drums
tar (frame drum)
set of *Granite Blocks*
cricket (sound effect)
(All above mounted with appropriate hardware on and around a two-tiered drum rack.)

Percussionist's List

3 timpani
1 malletKAT MIDI mallet controller (used to trigger samples of xylophone, gamelan, timpani, orchestra bells, woodblock, marimba, boobams, vibes, chimes, and tubaphone)
1 set of orchestra bells
3 woodblocks
] suspended cymbal
1 tambourine
1 Indian bowl drum
1 34" Odaiko (Japanese drum)
1 tsutsumi
1 tar
1 triple coin clapper
2 octaves of crotales
1 Chinese cymbal
1 pair of Chinese cymbals played as piatti on a hi-hat stand
1 set chappa (small heavy cymbals used for chings)
2 nipple gongs
I wind gong
1 34" tam-tam
1 16" tam-tam
2 Chinese bao gongs
3 kin
1 dobachi (temple bell)
1 bell tree
set hindy bells
sound plate
triple infinity bar
pair Indian finger cymbals
set of temple blocks
24" temple block (mokugyo)
1 pair of hollow prayer stones
1 pair of Japanese kabuki clappers
] set of chestnut rattles
(Both players trigger a Roland S-770 sampler, and employ an extensive miking and monitoring setup provided by the theater's sound department.)

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the greatest players in the world are playing in the pits. It's nice to have a job with them here.

On the other hand, our Broadway pit musician's contract allows us to take up to 50% of the time off and still keep our position in the orchestra. That's important, because it means that I'm not locked into staying in town on a given show. I'm free to be involved with other projects without losing my steady gig. So I do a variety of pop records and projects. For example, I toured the entire summer of '91 with the Triplets.

RVH: Getting back to *Miss Saigon,* is there dialogue in the show, or is it sung all the way through?

HJ: It's sung all the way through, which has become the norm since Andrew Lloyd Weber's shows have been so successful. I kind of miss the dialogue every now and again. I played the last run of *The King And I,* and the dialogue offered a little bit of relief. That's the space where the audience takes a little breather. Watching a show like *Miss Saigon* or *Les Miz,* there's so much to take in all at once. It doesn't stop.

*And of course, neither does the playing, which keeps the orchestra busy. While the actors may come in or out of the show, the musicians play throughout. And from my opportunity to watch Michael and Howard weave their way over, around, and between the dozens of instruments shoe-horned into their corner of the pit, I can attest to the fact that they easily perform as much intricate choreography as that being done on stage. But both of these talented men have a very positive attitude about it all. As Howard puts it: "It's the coolest-*looking *pit on Broadway!"*

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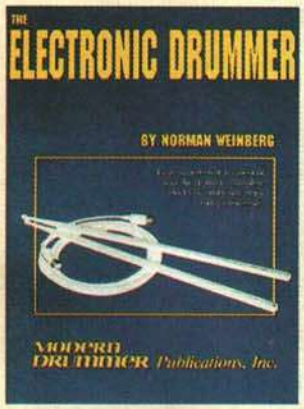

by Norman Weinberg
From simple uses of electronics to complex setups, this book will tell you what you need to know in straightforward, "user-friendly" language.

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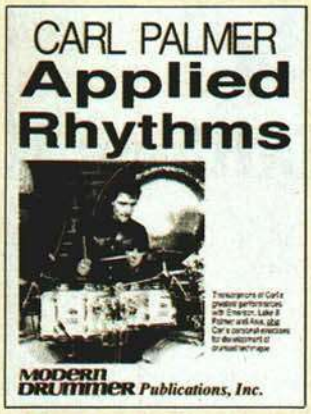

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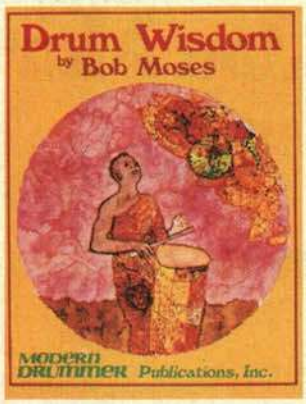

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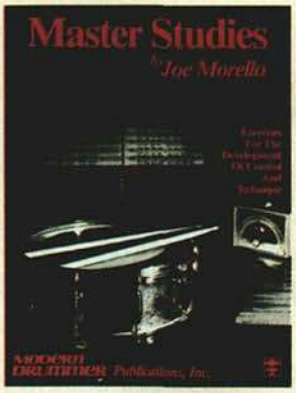

by Joe Morello
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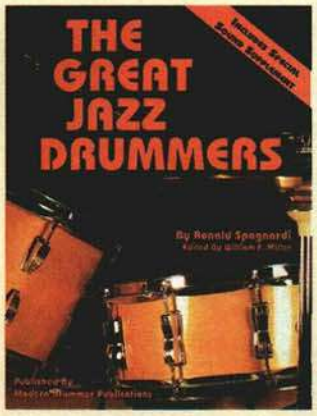

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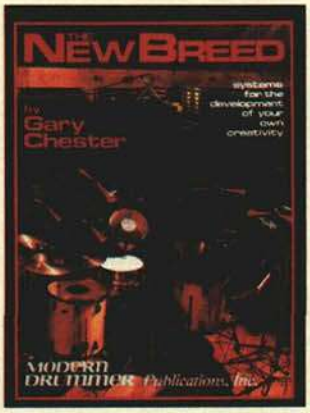

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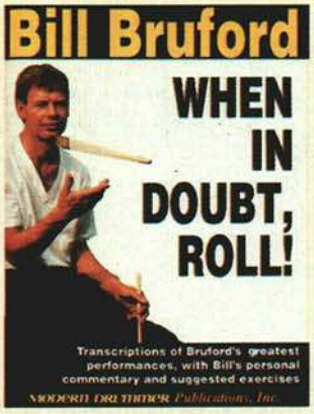

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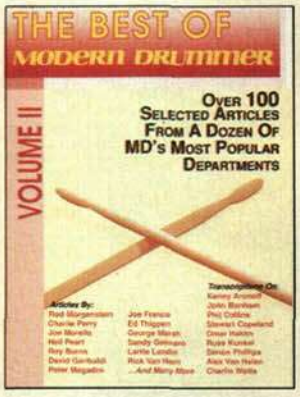

The Best Of Modern Drummer is jam packed with advice, concepts, and tons of musical examples. If you've missed any of *MD*, **The Best Of Modern Drummer** brings it all back home—in one valuable reference book.

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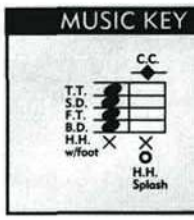
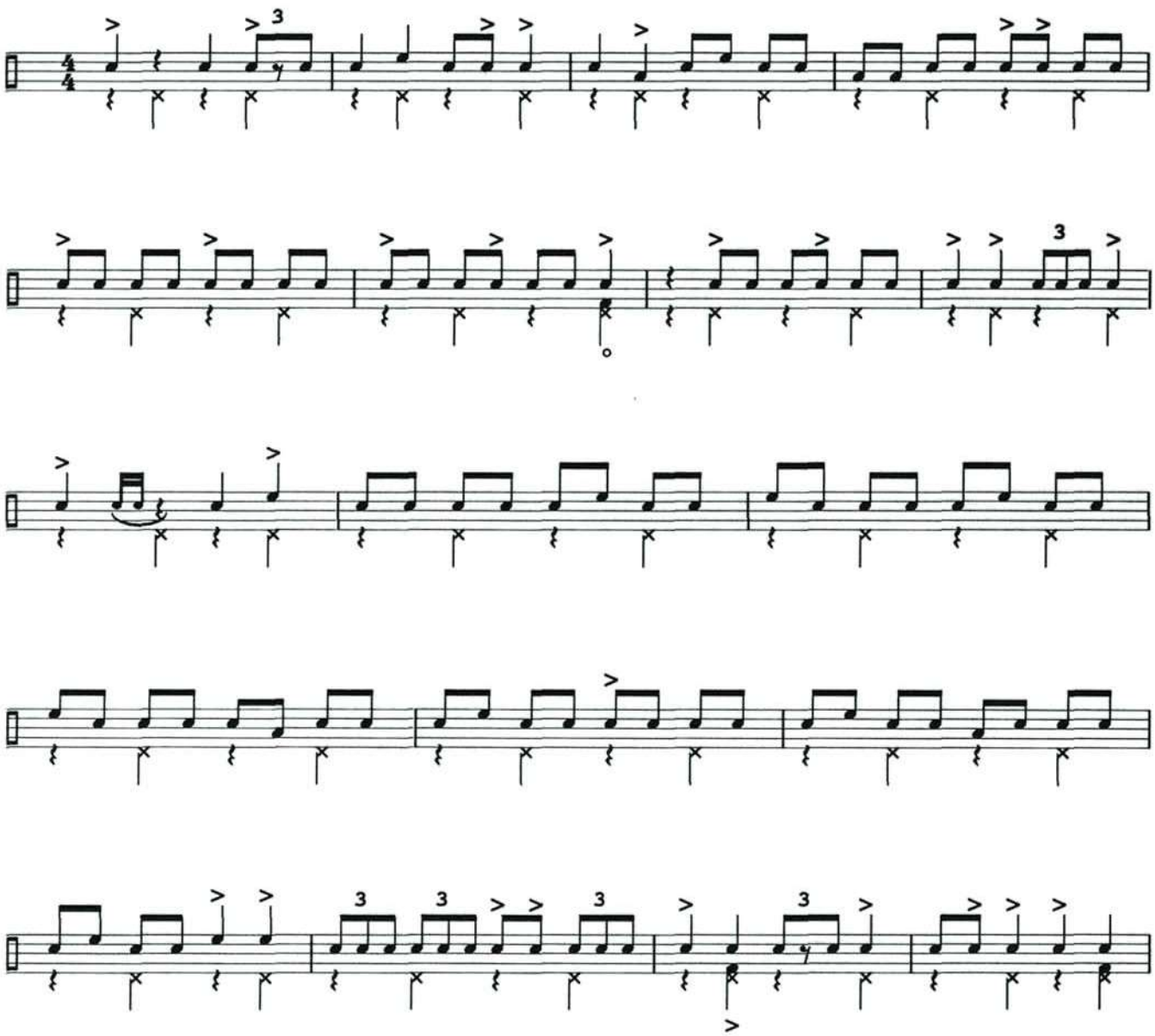
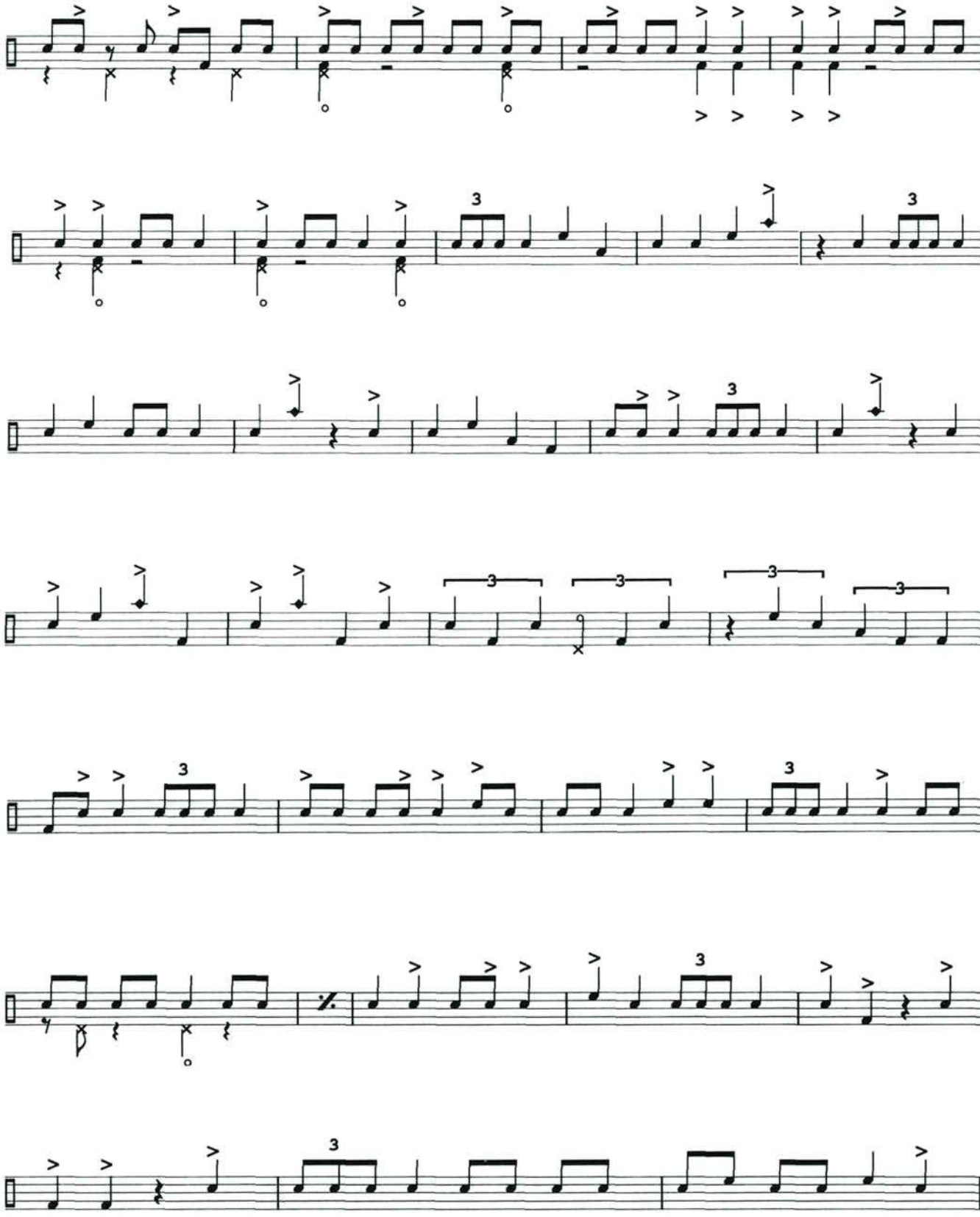
Joe Morello:
"Charles Matthew Hallelujah"

Transcribed by Doug Rolfe



This month's *Drum Soloist* features a 48-measure brush solo from the incredible Joe Morello. On this uptempo track from Dave Brubeck's album *Time Further Out* (released in December 1961), Joe tastefully displays his technique, using accents in his hands and feet to break up the time. A nice example of soloing with brushes.

continued from page 35

your idea until you have it patented.' When they ask why, I say, 'It may be that our engineers are working on something similar. If you come here and show it to us and we say no—and then we come out with our own idea shortly thereafter—you may think that we stole your idea and want to sue us. When you have a patent, we'll talk about it.'"

Production

Once an item is designed, it's likely to be among the hundreds that are made in Sonor's huge machine shop—along with tools and equipment used to make still more items. Dozens of specially adapted machines are dedicated to a wide variety of turning, stamping, cutting, and shaping operations. Why operate such an extensive facility in-house?

"Because the best way to have quality under control is to produce everything yourself," replies Karl-Heinz. "The more components you buy from outside sources, the less control you have over the quality of those components. What we do buy from outside are rivets, screws, and minor assembly parts. But everything else we use to build our drums we make in-house, including shells, hardware, rims, and drumheads. Sometimes our machines are too busy, and then other companies here in the area help us out. But in those cases, the tools *they* use for making the parts were made here in the company. This is important to understand, because it's a major reason that Sonor is more expensive than other products on the world market.

"We're not interested in taking part in a price war," Karl-Heinz continues. "What we need are products with features and quality that give a dealer something to talk about in a drumshop. Someone could come into a shop and look at a drumkit and say, 'This is the same kit I could get from Taiwan, but it costs a thousand bucks more!' People need to understand *why* it costs a thousand bucks more. We have so many steps that we take care of in our production, it makes it more expensive. We have plenty of alternatives; we could make some of our drums more cheaply and drop the price 40%. But we don't want to do that, because in that case we would have the same quality level as our competitors."

Sonor's drums differ from those of their competitors in several specific ways. The manner in which their exotic-wood drumshells are finished is just one of those differences. Karl-Heinz outlines the process.

"We use many special veneers to cover our drums, including African bubinga, rosewood, oak, and ebony. On our competitors' drums, the grain of the veneer goes around the shell. On ours, the grain runs vertically. The reason is that there are two different ways to produce a very thin veneer. One is to put a tree on a big turning machine and come around with a knife and cut the plies off. But we cut the tree in half lengthwise, and take plies out of the middle, in a vertical configuration. Our workmen have to take great care that the vertical grains of our veneer sections run symmetrically. No machine can do that; a skilled person must decide where to cut each veneer segment to fit it onto the drum to make the grain run symmetrically. This is a unique feature of Sonor drums; no one else places their veneers in this manner."

Sonor's attention to the details of drum physics is illustrated by the way they make the wooden tension hoops for their bass drums. Bass drum shells are under pressure from gravity, head tension, and the weight of any drums that might be mounted above them—all of which is vertical pressure against the circumference of the shell. Hoops, on the other hand, are under pressure from the tension claws pulling them against the drumhead—a horizontal pressure. So Sonor actually makes the hoops in a different manner from the shells to account for this different direction of pressure.

"There are many steps in our production that we could save," says Karl-Heinz, "and at the end we would get a similar product. But we would not have all the features that make our products what they are. For example, there are two ways to make metal snare drums. One is to take a flat strip of steel and bend it around in a circle. This takes about ten seconds, and you have the basic shell. But you also have a welding seam there that will always cause an interruption in the vibration and the resonance of the shell. We start all our metal snare

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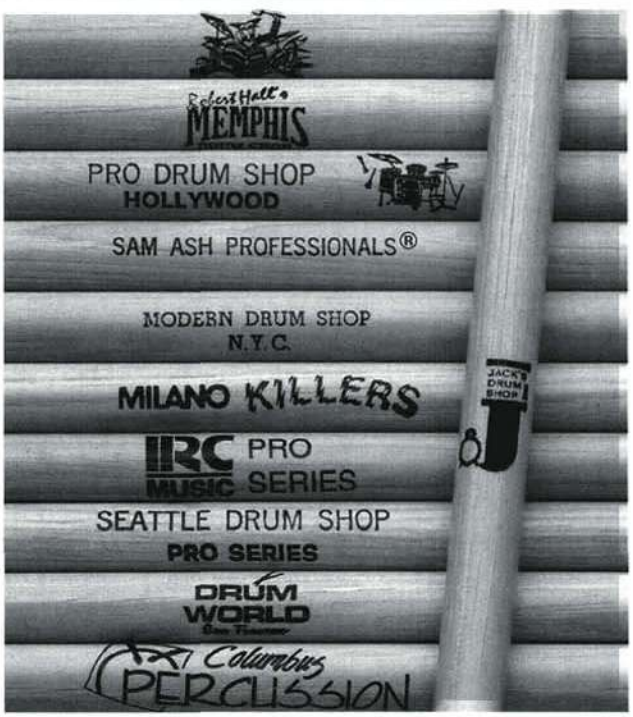

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"What makes our process better also makes it more expensive. One cost is time: It takes us about 12 to 15 minutes to press the material into the proper shape—versus ten seconds to bend a shell together. Also, the material itself is more expensive than normal steel, because it must have high elasticity in order to submit to this process. We do economize in one area, which is that we work down in size: The portion that is cut away from a large rim can be used to create a smaller one. And we use some of the material left over from the smaller rims to make clamps and other smaller items. We try to have very little waste. This is also true in our woodworking department. Ten years ago, all our wood scrap was thrown away. Today, it is the fuel source for the heating system for the entire company."

To appreciate the complexity of Sonor's tooling and assembly operations, one must examine the number of drum and hardware series offered by the company, then multiply that figure by the number of individual component parts for each item within each line. (Keep in mind that a bass drum pedal or a snare drum stand might involve a dozen or more separate parts.) Among those are small parts that once again reflect the company's focus on detail—such as special rivets. Stands are held together with full-metal rivets that are machined to form two separate heads. This is a time-consuming process, but Sonor believes that it makes the connection virtually indestructible. As Karl-Heinz says, "The rivets on many stands work loose after a year or so, and eventually fall out. With ours, as long as you put a drop of oil on the moving parts from time to time, you might have one of our stands for 25 years or more. When you figure it that way, our 'more expensive' stands wind up being very economical in the long run."

All metal parts go from the manufacturing department into the sanding and polishing department before being plat-

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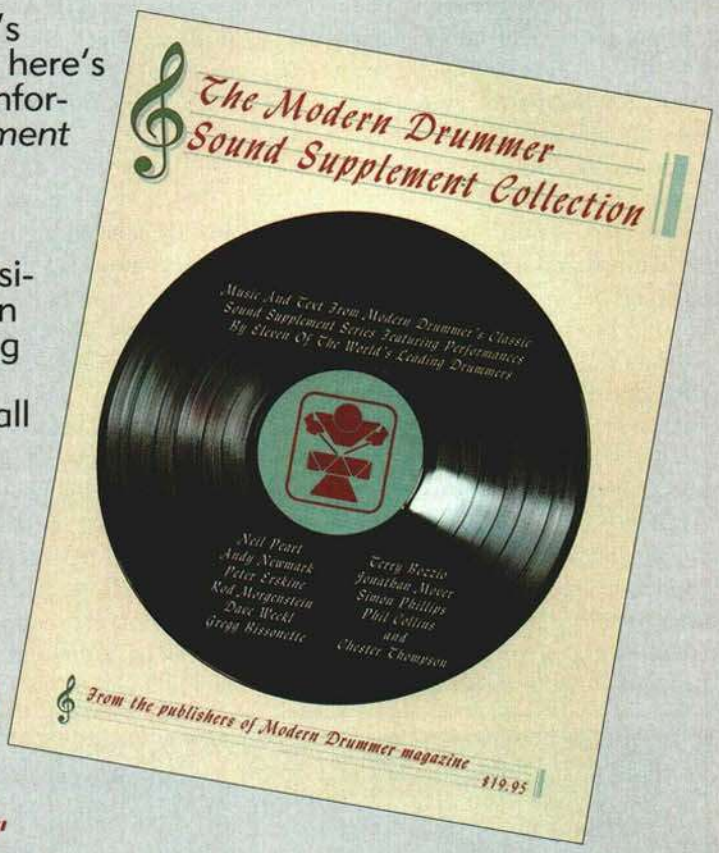

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ed. After each part is plated, it comes back out to this department for a soft polishing and buffing. Karl-Heinz points out that Sonor's plating operation is another feature unique to the company.

"One of our big differences from all our competitors," says Karl-Heinz, "is that all our parts are triple-plated. You can put parts right into a chrome bath, and they'll look very good when they come out. But normal wear and tear will take the chrome off rather quickly. And chrome, by itself, is not a protection against rust, either.

"We start by putting the parts through a chemical and a high-frequency sonic cleaning before they go into the various chemical baths. Then we plate each part with nickel, then add copper, and finish with chrome. This is very important, because the nickel and copper together are the real protection against rust. With our copper-plated hardware (the *Hilite Exclusive* series) we go copper-nickel-copper. Then we put clear lacquer on the copper, because otherwise it gets green after awhile."

Following plating, the final buffing process is an area where details are checked yet again. "Every single piece is taken in someone's hands for polishing," says Karl-Heinz, "so there is already some quality control happening. If they see that something is wrong with a part, they put it aside right away. It's a hard job; the operator has to sit all day long pressing small parts against a sanding or buffing wheel. But on the other hand, they make good money, and they carry a lot of responsibility."

Drum Construction

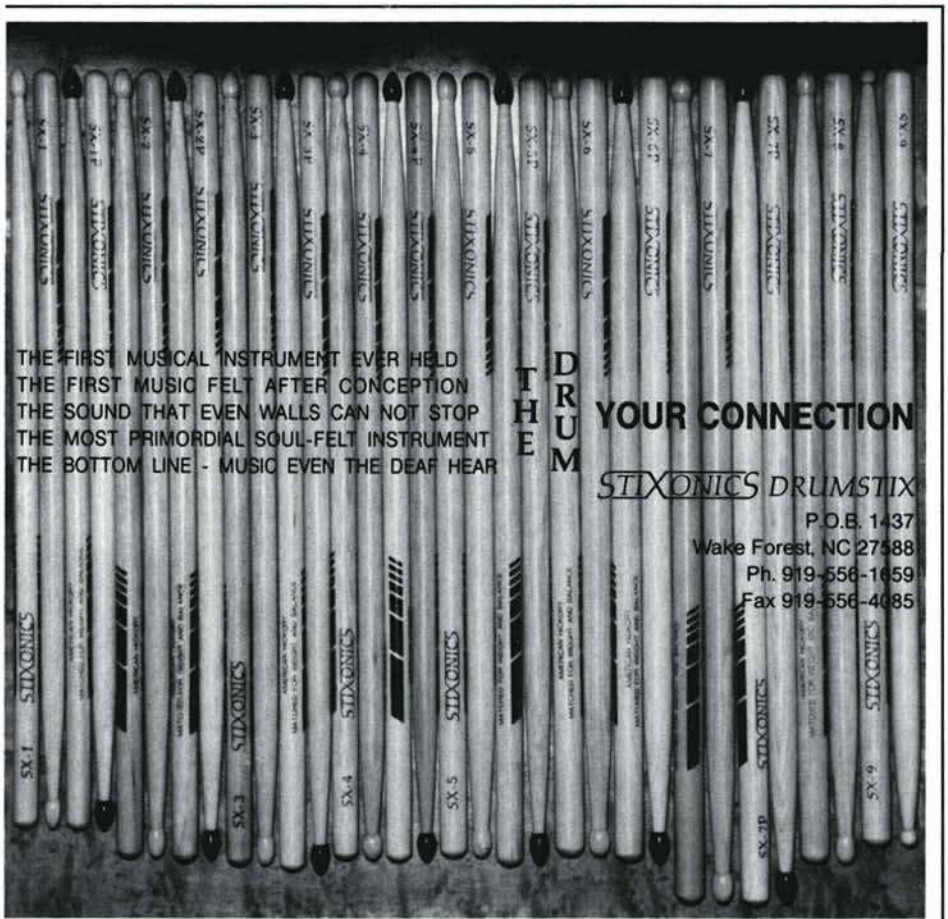
Sonor's woodworking operation is slightly smaller, but no less precise, than the metalworking department. It is here that very thin "plates" made of three- and five-ply birch, maple, etc. are turned into drumshells. Operators must carefully cut this material into the right sizes, because three of these plates will be used to create a shell. When they are pressed together in the mold, the outside plate must be the longest, while the inside must be shortest—with the middle plate sized in between. "They must be very exact," comments Karl-Heinz. "If the operators cut one millimeter too much, there will be a gap where the shell should meet. If the plates don't close properly, you have an interruption in the sound and vibration of the shell."

The plates are placed in a cylindrical pressure mold, with their seams staggered in order to gain the most strength. There is a separate mold for each size of shell. The mold heats up to 180° (centigrade) to "bake" the shell under both high pressure and high temperature. The time varies with the size of shell; a bass drum shell typically takes about 30 minutes. The plates are cut on an angle so that the inside edges can slide sideways a bit to ensure a perfect seam; the outside edges of the finished shell are trimmed to correct size.

One interesting feature of Sonor's shell-molding process is that inside pressure is only used on bass drums with an interior veneer finish. Otherwise, the natural inclination of the plies to open back up exerts enough force against the outside pressure of the mold to form a strong shell. And yet, once the shell is finished, that inclination has been eliminated. "When we take the shell out," says Karl-Heinz, "you could cut it right through the middle, and the plies would never try to open up. That means that there is no longer any tension within the shell. If you have that tension, the shell can't transport vibration. Our process prevents that from happening."

After the shells have been molded, they are trimmed to exact size, and then given their 45° bearing edges. They are then sanded inside and out, at which point they are ready to be covered or lacquered, depending on which line they are intended for. The company has three different lacquering departments: one for clear lacquering over natural wood finishes, another for high-gloss colored lacquer finishes, and one in which the copper-finished hardware pieces from the *Hilite Exclusive* series receive a protective coating.

The high-gloss lacquering operation is the most intricate, involving a six-step sanding/lacquering process and a special spraying room. When the final high-gloss lacquer coat is applied, the entire floor of the spraying room is flooded with water over half an inch deep, while air is pumped into the room under pressure. This ensures that absolutely no dust is present during the spraying operation.



Additionally, the sprayers wear dust-free suits, and the room is sealed while spraying is taking place.

The only Sonor shells that are covered are those in the *Force 1000* and *Force 2000* lines. Karl-Heinz states that "Sonor is the only company that covers its shells the way we do. Many of our competitors place double-faced tape at both edges, then roll the covering on. But there is nothing gluing the covering to the shell in the middle. Of course, when the lugs are bolted on, the covering is held close to the shell. But you can still feel that there is space between the shell and the covering. A covering muffles a shell somewhat anyway, because it is of a completely different material. But if you make the drum with a space between the covering and the shell, the muffling is even more pronounced. We put a special glue on the whole surface of the shell and on the whole surface of the covering. Then a special machine that we built ourselves rolls the covering on under high pressure. When this is done, you would destroy the shell before you could get the covering off of it. This is important because this way we don't get as much muffling effect. The covering becomes more a part of the shell itself."

Covered or lacquered shells are drilled for lug, tom-mount, and other holes on a machine controlled completely by a computer. Shells are held on a rotating drum, while three different drills move into the various positions necessary to put all the required holes into the shell. Every hole is drilled within one rotation; the entire operation takes only a few seconds. This is important, because while Sonor is concerned with its high-quality image, it must also be concerned with maintaining price control in order to be competitive. To that end, production methods are streamlined wherever possible—such as using a machine to drill holes and a conveyer-belt assembly line to expedite the final assembly of some drums. The company prefers to economize on time, rather than on quality.

Even Sonor's method of assembling and preparing drums for shipping is unique, as Karl-Heinz explains. "We don't put heads on floor toms or bass drums," he says, "because they're shipped in 'nested' packaging. We put the heads on rack toms, but we don't tune them, because every drummer has a different way of tuning tom-toms. But with snares, we feel that there is an optimum tuning range, and we take special pride in the fact that we actually tune every snare drum before we ship it.

"We place each drum on a stand in front of a microphone connected to a Strobotuner, and tap the drum with a small mallet. The operator goes around and around, tuning each lug until the pitch at that lug matches the desired pitch on the tuner—which will vary with the size and type of snare drum. Of course, a drum is never 100% tunable to a specific pitch. But we can come very close. This method may not give a tuning that every drummer would use, but it will at least create a good-sounding drum. We feel that this is important, since most stores don't tune a drum when they put it on their display floor. If a customer walks in and hits half a dozen snare drums, that customer is likely to buy the one that sounds the best right then and there. Since we instituted this operation, we've more than doubled our sales of snare drums."

Drumheads

Considering that Sonor got its start making drumheads, and that the West German operations began with the same product, it's not surprising to learn that Sonor is once again in the drumhead business—albeit after a significant absence. Karl-Heinz explains the company's re-entry into this highly competitive field.

"For years we used Remo heads exclusively on our drums—and sold them here in Germany. Most other drum companies also used Remo heads; they had something like a monopoly on the world market. Remo offered a good product, good price, good sound—no question. But then they started producing drums, too—and the other manufacturers said, 'Hey, what's going on? We spend millions of dollars on drumheads from Remo, and now they're using this money to become our competitor in drums.' So many companies have started using other heads—or making their own.

"We had our own plastic drumhead production for a while, but we stopped because, at the time, it was more economical to buy Remo heads than to make our own. But three years ago we decided to try making our own again. We also decided that it made no sense to come out with heads essentially similar to Remo's; they had to be different. The plastic films we are using are basically the same. There are some steps involving tension and temperature that are production secrets, but the most important difference is in how we hold the plastic material in the metal rims.

"We use an aluminum channel ring, with an outside edge that is higher than the inside edge. The plastic film is placed across this ring, and then a second, inner ring made of square aluminum bar stock is pressed into the channel ring. Then the machine turns around several times and rolls that higher outer edge over, folding it over the inner aluminum bar ring to lock it down and secure the head against pull-out. Other manufacturers use an inner-ring system, but no one else uses a square inner ring like we do. We've tightened our heads up to where the lugs pulled out of the drum, but we've never had a head pull out of the ring. As far as sales go, we are very strong in Germany and Europe; in the U.S. it's a price problem. But we are thinking about a promotional campaign and looking for some endorsers to use the heads exclusively. Basically, this department has only been running about two and a half years."

On December 6, 1991, shortly after *MD's* visit to Sonor, Horst Link announced his retirement as president of Johs. Link GmbH & Co.KG/Sonor Drums. On January 1, 1992, the Chairman of the Board of Hohner AG, Mr. Gunter Darazs, took the position of Managing Director, and Mr. Uwe Melzer from Hohner was appointed General Manager. In an open letter to the industry, Mr. Link, who will remain associated with the company as a consultant, stated: "We can proudly look upon the Sonor musical instrument business over the last 45 years. The merger with the international Hohner group presents a promising future.... The name Sonor will remain the standard by which percussion instruments of the highest quality will be measured." Considering both the history and the forward-thinking nature of the Sonor company, there's no reason to doubt Mr. Link's predictions.

GMS Road Series Kit

GMS's *Road Series* is primarily their *Grand Master* series of drums with a high gloss wrap replacing a painted finish. GMS states that this wrapping won't adversely affect sound, yet it will significantly reduce the kit's price. Like the *Grand Master* kits, *Road Series* kits feature 8-ply all-maple shells, solid brass machined lugs, and RIMS mounts. **GMS c/o Paiste America, Inc., 460 Atlas Street, Brea, CA 92621, tel: (714) 529-2222, (800) 472-4783, fax: (714) 671-5869.**

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New From Sabian

Sabian has recently introduced three new products. Their AA *El Sabor* is an 18" ride/crash/bell cymbal developed specifically for Latin players looking for a multipurpose cymbal. *El Sabor* is thin and features a slightly flanged edge and an unlathed bell, which helps produce a quick crash with less overtone, plus a bright bell sound and controlled ride sound.

The HH *Jazz Ride* cymbal comes in 20" and 22" sizes, and is said to deliver "mellow, glassy, bright, and warm sounds," and to sound good at low and high dynamics.

Sabian's *China Gongs* are available in 14", 16", 18", 20", and 22" sizes, and were

Sabian's China Gongs

designed to provide a gong-like sound in an easily positioned and less expensive instrument. *China Gongs* are pitched but not tuned, and are described by the makers as "mellow, dark, and warm, with an absence of trashiness." **Sabian, Ltd., Main St., Meductic, New Brunswick, Canada EOH 1LO, tel: (506) 272-2019, fax: (506) 272-2081.**

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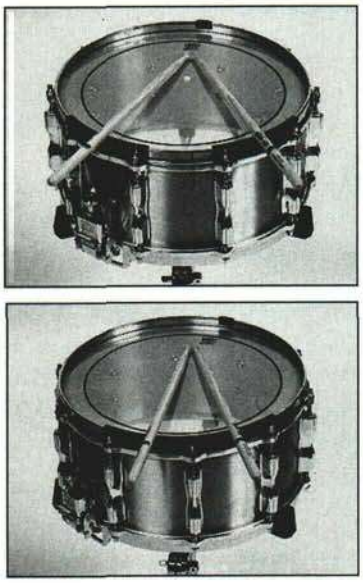
Pearl is now offering CDs by Dennis Chambers and Gregg Bissonette, as well as one featuring Casey Scheuerell, Walfredo Reyes, Jr., and Maria Martinez.

Big City, Chambers' first CD, finds Dennis in a jazz setting, while *Siblings,* Bissonette's offering, features Gregg and his brother Matt in a rock setting. *No Borders* features Scheuerell, Reyes, and Martinez on compositions that intertwine Cuban, African, Japanese, Mexican, and Spanish influences.

In addition, Pearl offers a CD highlighting their OM percussion line, and another zeroing in on May microphones. **Pearl Audiophile Collection c/o Pearl Corp., 549 Metroplex Dr., Nashville,** TN **37211, tel: (615) 833-4477, fax: (615) 833-6242.**

HQ Stick Saver



HQ Percussion Products has introduced *Stick Saver,* which is meant to prevent breaking sticks while hitting rimshots. *Stick Saver* is made of hardened aluminum with a vinyl coating and fits over snare drum rims while secured by the drum's tension rods. According to HQ, feel and sound aren't appreciably affected. *Stick Saver* is available for 14", ten-lug snare drums with die-cast or flanged hoops, and comes in two models—a one-piece that covers three holes, and a two-piece with each piece covering two holes. Send $1 for a complete HQ catalog. **HQ Percussion Products, P.O. Box 430065, St. Louis, MO 63143.**

Fredrico Percussion Spring Thing

According to its makers, Fredrico Percussion's *Spring Thing* is a cross between a berimbau and a reco-reco. The instrument consists of a spring stretched between two posts. The posts are connected to a rod tipped with either one or two resonator cups. Players rock the instrument on their stomachs while

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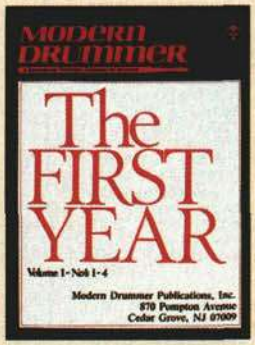

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scraping a stick along the length of the spring. *Spring Thing* is made in the U.S. of an all-metal construction, and comes in multi-color finishes. It can also either be hand-held or played mounted on a multi-clamp. **Fredrico Percussion, 152 Lancaster Blvd., Mechanicsburg, PA 17055, (717) 766-1332.**

RIMS Yamaha Fix It Kit

For those having problems attaching RIMS mounts to their 8", 10", and 12" Yamaha *Maple Custom* series drums, PureCussion, maker of RIMS, has introduced its "Yamaha Fix It Kit," which will solve such problems. **PureCussion, Inc., 3611 Wooddale Ave. South, Minneapolis, MN 55416, tel: (612) 927-2330, fax: (612) 927-2333.**

Visu-Lite Electronic Cymbals

According to Electronic Percussion Systems, their *Visu-Lite* electronic cymbals allow drummers to access MIDI sound sources without giving up the feel of hitting a real cymbal. *Visu-Lite* cymbals mount on standard cymbal stands and come in six neon colors and four sizes. *Visu-Lites* are made from acrylic and come equipped with a spring-lock connector that makes the cymbal compatible with many MIDI interface units. A cable and 1/4″ phone plug is provided. **Electronic Percussion Systems, P.O. Box 7481, St. Cloud, MN 56302.**

Stixonics Nylon-Tip Rock Model Stick

Stixonics has introduced their new *SX-7P* model, which is a nylon-tip version of their *SX-7* hickory heavy rock drumstick. The stick measures 17" x 5/8" and features a beefier neck and shoulder. All Stixonics sticks are match-paired for balance and weight to within one gram of each other. **Stixonics, P.O. Box 1437, Wake Forest, N.C. 27587, tel: (919) 556-1659, fax: (919) 556-4085.**

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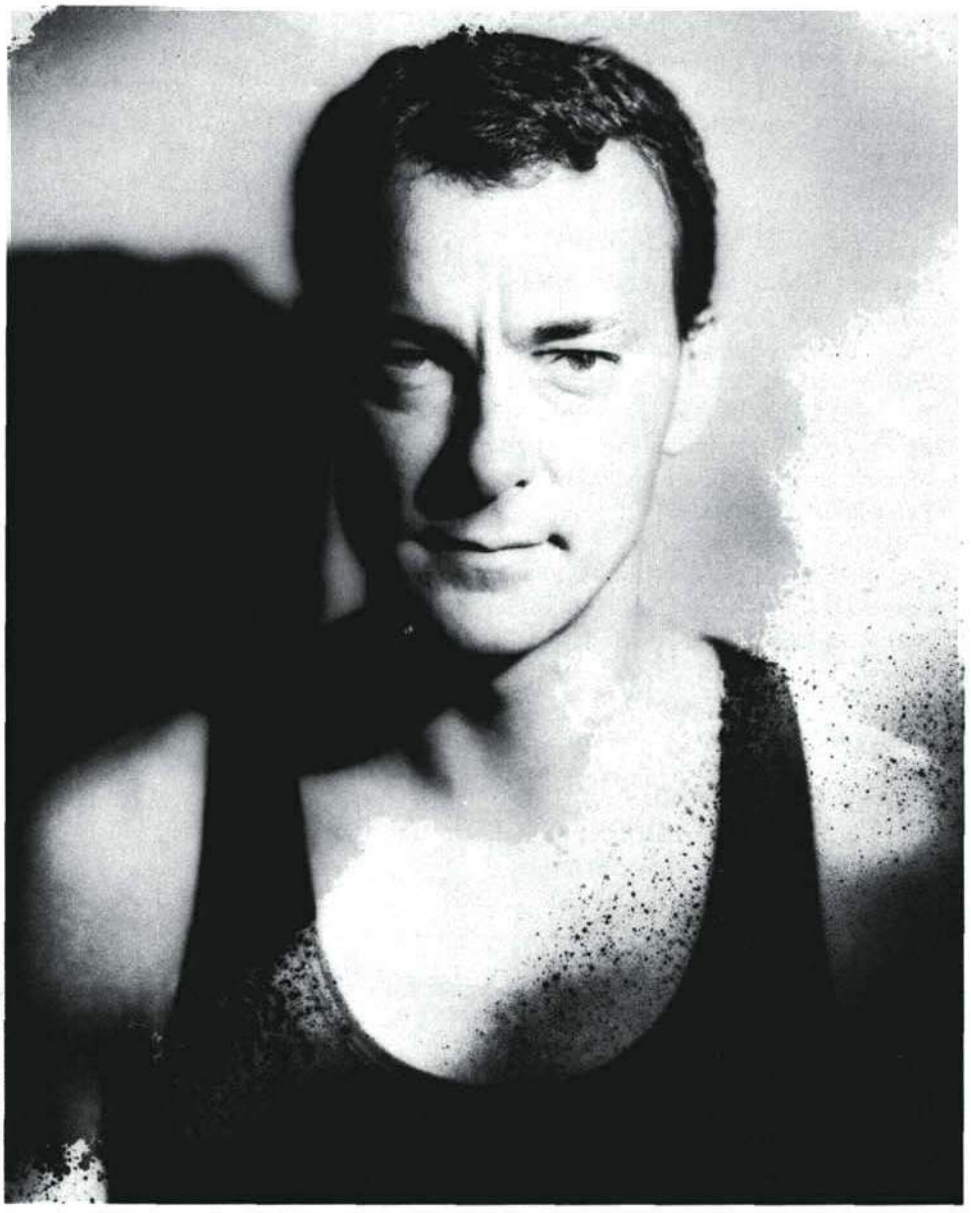

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MODERN DRUMMER

Sorum Helps Out Stay In School Program

Left to right: Thomas Stewart and Shannon Nedved of Skin Deep, Matt Sorum, Courtney Ravkind of Pioneer Electronics, and Trent Morue and Scott Mayo of Skin Deep

Guns N' Roses' Matt Sorum recently played with the band Skin Deep, who were winners of a contest for the benefit of Cities In Schools (CIS), the nation's largest organization dedicated to prevent school drop-outs. Skin Deep won the grand prize for their theme song, which was used in Pioneer Electronics' "Rocking The Nation For Education" songwriting contest. A portion of the proceeds from ticket sales to the event went to benefit CIS.

Endorser News

Bobby Rondinelli and Ndugu Chancier using Yamaha drumsticks.

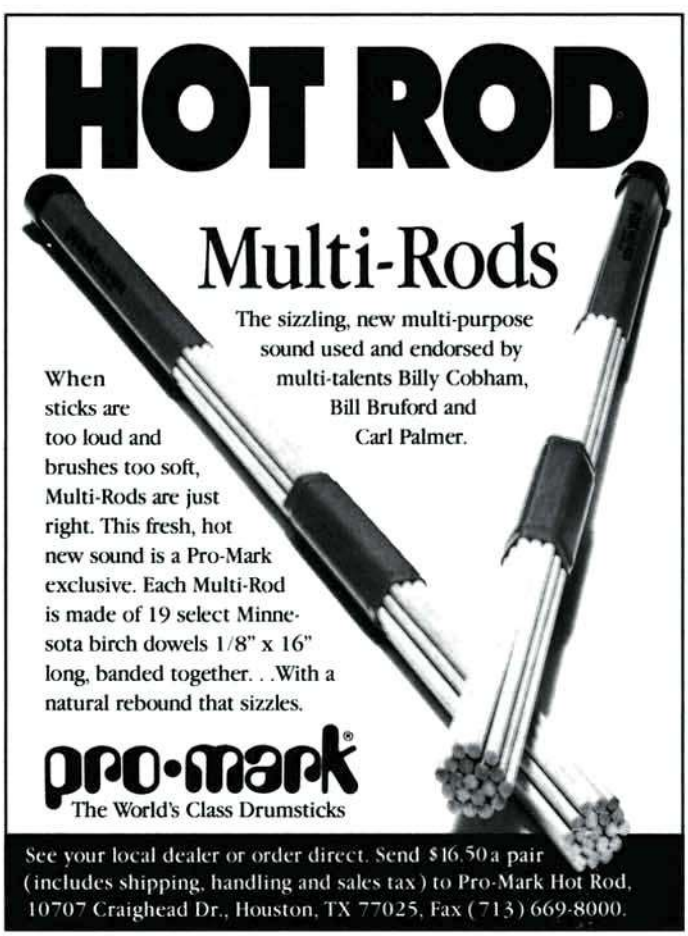
Anton Fig, Mike Bordin, Simon Phillips, Barry "Frosty" Smith, Grant Young, Mark Zonder, Brandon Lee Fjetland, Ben Gramm, Harvey Mason, and **Deborah Dobkin** using PureCussion equipment.

Remo's drumset endorser list now includes **Max Roach, Louie Perez, Paul Kriebeck, Robert Rodriguez,** and **Dave Stefanelli. Liberty DeVitto, David Garibaldi, Lou Molino, Marvin "Smitty" Smith, and Tico Torres** are using Remo heads.

Fredrico Percussion's list of endorsers includes **Airto, Jim Brock, Doc Gibbs, Mickey Hart, John Hernandez, Joe Bellia, Ron Bushy, Ricky Sebastian, Michael Shapiro, Rufus Mapp, Gordon Gottlieb, Jamey Haddad, Giovanni Hidalgo, Adam Nussbaum, Dave Samuels, Emedin Rivera, Mongo Santamaria, Ray Solis, Jonathan Norton, Joe Morello, Mingo Araujo, Cyro Baptista,** and **Dom Chacal.**

Radio Show Features Historic Drumming

Host Ray Smith's *Jazz Decades* radio program is now being broadcast nationally, giving musicians and fans of jazz from the turn of the century on up to today an opportunity to hear the greatest jazz performances ever recorded. The weekly, hour-long show features music culled from Smith's own 80,000-volume collection of historic jazz records. For those interested in hearing the originators and ground-breakers in jazz drumming, the show should be quite enlightening. Check local listings for schedules in your area.



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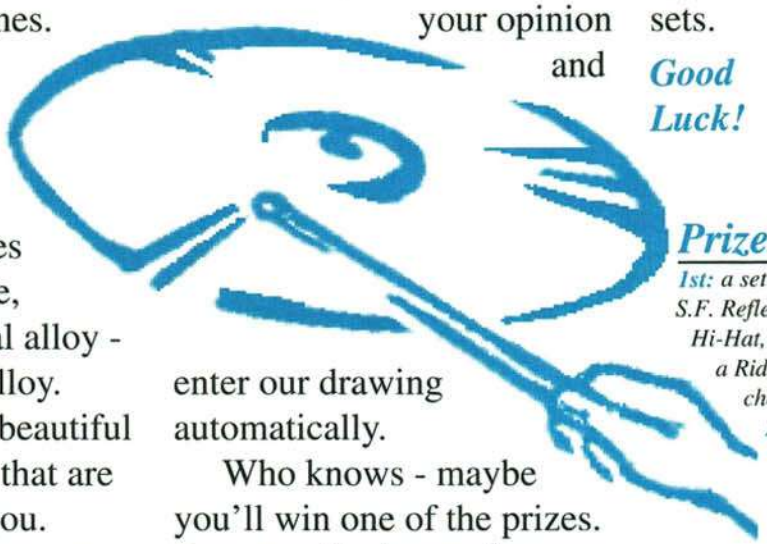
Compare our Sound Formula and Sound Formula Reflector to Zildjian's A & Custom A and to Sabian's AA & AAX and win valuable percussion gear!

Sound Formula and Sound Formula Reflector are Paiste's new professional cymbal lines. They're made according to traditional Paiste cymbal design principles from our unique, patented cymbal alloy - Paiste Sound Alloy. The results are beautiful cymbal sounds that are sure to please you.

Naturally, you can imagine how *we* feel they compare to Zildjian's A & Custom A as well as Sabian's AA and AAX lines. But we want to hear *your* side of the story. So, visit your favorite store, try all these cymbal lines for their sound, write us about your opinion and enter our drawing automatically.



Who knows - maybe you'll win one of the prizes. But one thing's certain: you'll discover a great cymbal sound and join drummers like Jeff Porcaro, Carlos Vega, Will Kennedy, and Chad Wackerman who've already chosen Sound Formulas for their cymbal sets.

Good Luck!

REFLECTOR

Prizes

1st: a set of Sound Formula or S.F. Reflector cymbals: Hi-Hat, two Crashes and a Ride, size and models your choice.

2nd: a GMS Grand Master Series Maple Shell Snare Drum, finish your choice.

3rd - 10th: a dozen pair Rimshot Drum Sticks, model(s) your choice. 11th - 30th: a Paiste T-shirt, style and size your choice. And, if you win and have already purchased an item identical to the one you win, we'll refund your purchase price!

Paiste "Sound Contest" Official Rules:

1. No purchase necessary. In order to qualify, visit a music dealer and compare Paiste Sound Formula and Sound Formula Reflector to Zildjian A and Custom A, Sabian AA and AAX. Then write a letter to Paiste, describing the opinion you formed about the sound qualities of Sound Formula cymbals versus the competition. Letters should be addressed to "Paiste Sound Contest", 460 Atlas Street, Brea, California 92621. All letters must be received by September 30, 1992. The contest begins May 1, 1992 and ends September 30, 1992. The winners will be selected at random from all entries received by Paiste. The drawing will be held on October 1, 1992. The winners will be notified by certified mail or telephone.

2. Prizes are: 1st: a set of Sound Formula or S.F. Reflector cymbals: Hi-Hat, two Crashes and a Ride, sizes and models your choice. 2nd: a GMS Grand Master Series Maple Shell Snare Drum, finish your choice. 3rd - 10th: a Dozen pair of Rimshot Drum Sticks, model(s) your choice. 11th - 30th: a Paiste T-shirt, style and size your choice. Approximate retail value of prizes: $2,800. The winner's names will be published in a future issue of Modern Drummer. In the event that winners have purchased an item during the period of the Paiste Sound Contest which is identical to the prize they receive, they may elect, at their sole option, to receive a refund of their purchase price instead of the prize. All taxes are responsibility of the winner.

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3. Paiste is not responsible for lost, illegible, late, mutilated, or misdirected mail. All letters will become the property of Paiste, and none will be returned.

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5. The Paiste Sound Contest promotion is open to residents of the U.S.A. and Canada, except for employees or representatives of Paiste America, Inc., authorized Paiste distributors or dealers or members of the immediate family of any of the above. Void where prohibited by law. All federal, state and local laws and regulations apply.

6. For a list of the prize winners and prizes awarded, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to Paiste Sound Contest, 460 Atlas Street, Brea, California 92621. This contest is sponsored by Paiste America, Inc., 460 Atlas Street, Brea, California 92621.

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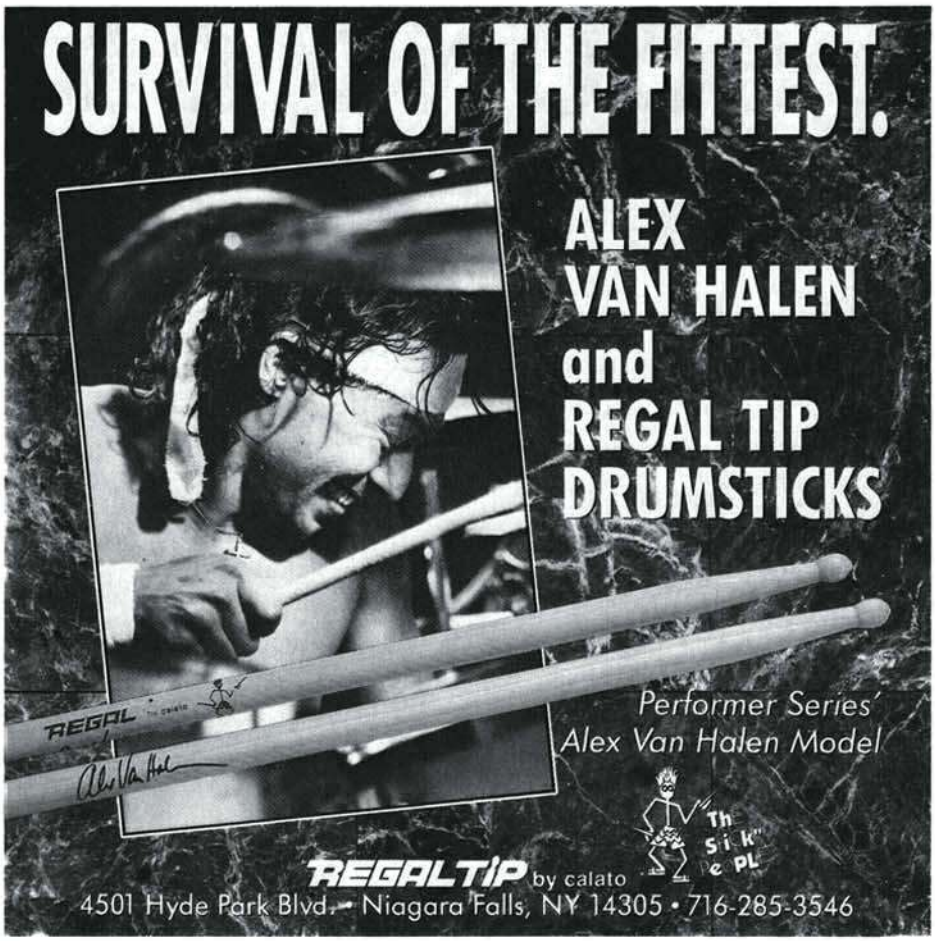
Monk Drum Competition Moves

The Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz has announced that the Jazz Drums Competition previously announced to take place in Washington, D.C. will in fact be held at Lincoln Center in New York City on Saturday, October 24 and Sunday, October 25. For an application or further information, contact Shelby Fischer at 5000 Klingle St., NW, Washington, D.C. 20015, (202) 364-7272.



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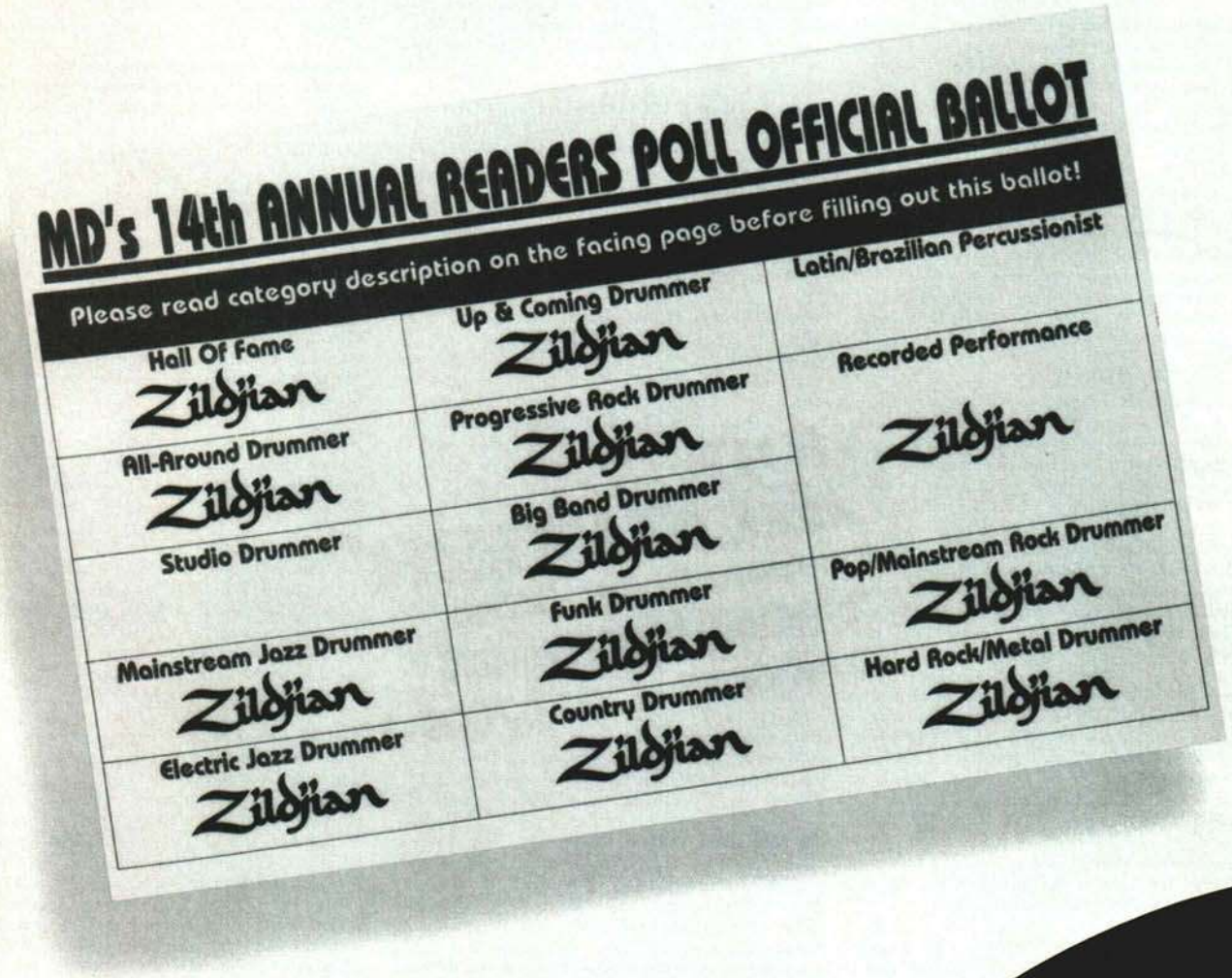

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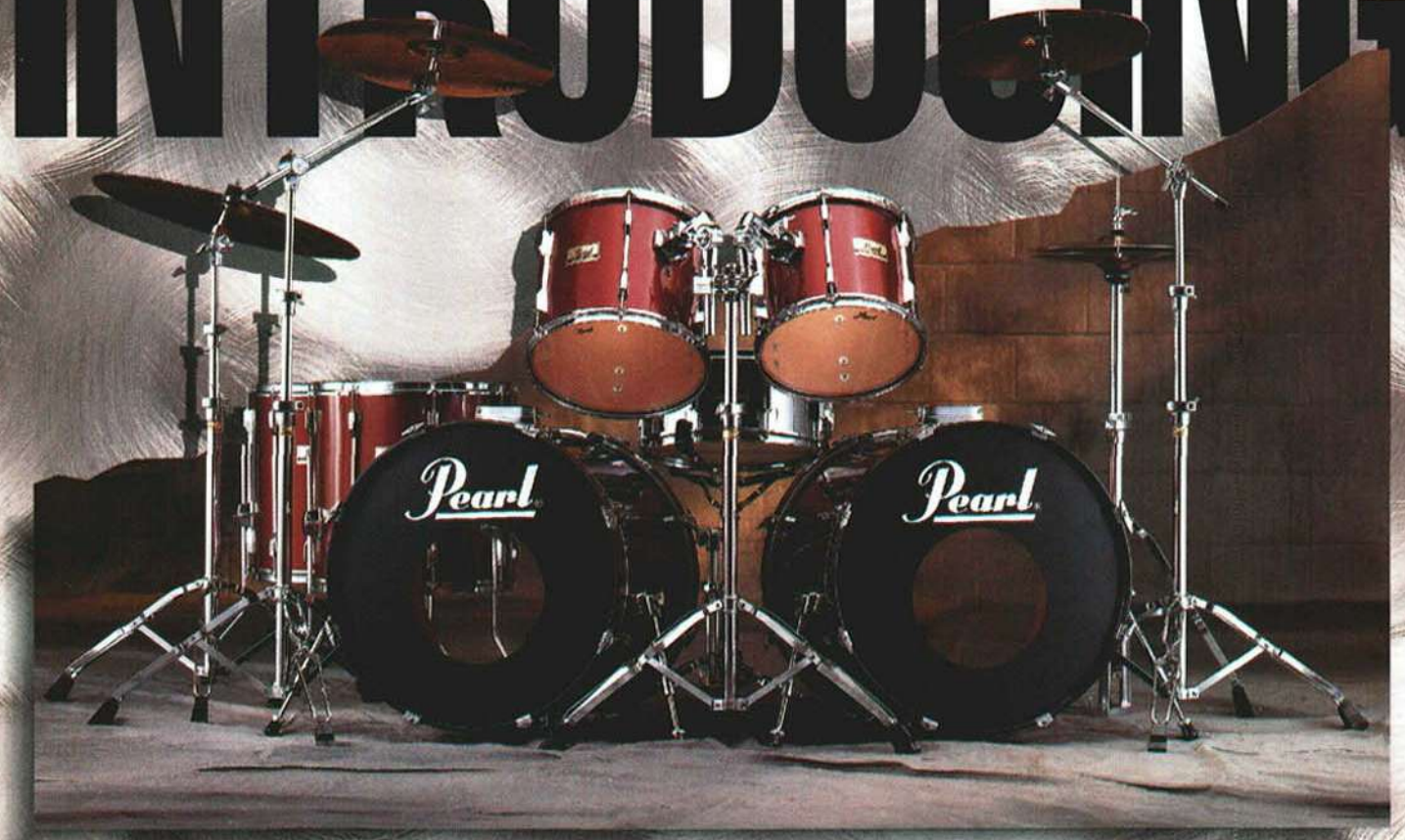

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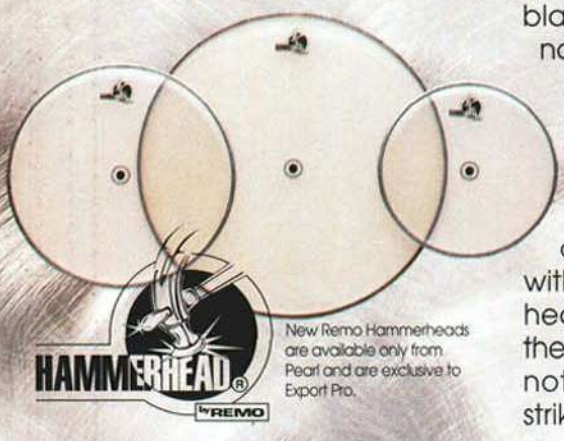

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JOHN "J.R." ROBINSON

John "J.R." Robinson and Luis Conte. Two of the world's most respected recording artists. Two guys who don't compromise when it comes to playing what's right for the song, or choosing the right equipment. That's why they have always relied on Zildjian cymbals. So when they were looking for the same dedication to perfection

LUIS CONTE

in their most important drumming tools ... their sticks, they came to us. That's why Zildjian's John Robinson model is a solid Hickory 16 5/8" long stick. And, like J.R., capable of handling any situation. The Luis Conte timbale stick not only meets Luis' exact specifications, but also stands up to his blistering timbale work. And like all Zildjian sticks, they're guaranteed straight 100% of the time. So whether they're coming down on our cymbals, or laying it down on tape, these new Artist Series sticks are first call, just like J.R. and Luis.

Zildjian DRUMSTICKS

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